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Seven die in Ulster road bomb

BY EDWARD GORMAN
AND RICHARD DUCE

SEVEN building workers were killed and seven others injured last night when a huge roadside bomb devastated their van in Northern Ireland.

The bomb had been planted in a culvert under the main Omagh to Cookstown road in Co Tyrone and the explosion could be heard ten miles away. The men who died had been working at Lisnally barracks in Omagh and are thought to have been victims of the IRA's campaign against contractors working for the security forces.

A 100-yard command line was found leading from the road to a point overlooking the scene of the blast, suggesting that the victims had been deliberately targeted. The attack appears to bear similarities to one on a military bus in August 1988 when the IRA triggered a bomb by remote control from high ground, killing eight young Light Infantry soldiers returning to their barracks.

Last night's bombing took place on a lonely stretch of road at a



crossroads called Teebane Cross near the staunchly republican village of Carrickmore. The injured were taken to the Mid-Ulster, Tyrone County and South Tyrone hospitals. Two were seriously ill at the Mid-Ulster hospital and another underwent emergency surgery. At the scene, police asked for floodlights to be brought in to help search for those unaccounted for.

The bombing came as the latest efforts to revive talks between nationalists and unionists on the future of the province all but collapsed. Peter Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, had earlier held

Building workers blown up in terrorist attack

talks in Dublin with Gerard Collins, the Irish foreign affairs minister, and later admitted that the prospect of renewed talks had receded.

Mr Brooke will now be pressed to take tougher security measures to deal with the IRA and some Unionist MPs believe the government should introduce selective internment to remove the senior commanders from both sides of the sectarian divide.

The prime minister last night spoke of his horror at the outrage, and declared: "A policy of bombing is odious, contemptible and cowardly and will never change the Government's policy in Northern Ireland."

William McCrea, the Democratic Unionist party MP for Mid-Ulster said: "I wish to condemn the

cruel and brutal murder of workers tonight in my constituency." Several innocent members of the community had been slaughtered by "murdering IRA scum" in a "deliberately targeted operation".

Ken Maginnis, security spokesman for the Ulster Unionist party, said: "There are two governments, one with responsibility for, and the other with an interest in, the welfare of people in Northern Ireland. What do they intend to do about these people in the higher echelons, the top of the first division of terrorism, who organise with impunity such as we saw today?"

Kevin McNamara, shadow Northern Ireland secretary, said the bombing was "another crime that can have no justification, whatever the political motives of those involved". The incident made it all

the more necessary that politicians should continue their talks on the future of Northern Ireland. "I hope we are not going to mourn the passing of another lost opportunity for talks," he said.

The latest murders bring the death toll from sectarian violence in the province to 11 this year. Last year, 75 civilians were killed, the highest toll in 15 years. Six big bombs have been detonated in Belfast in the past nine weeks, and a week ago, the government put extra troops on the streets to counter the IRA campaign there.

Last night's attack appears to have been the latest in a vicious campaign against individuals denounced by the IRA as "collaborators". The campaign has claimed the lives of people working for fruit merchants, building contractors, and catering firms. It has also resulted in companies quietly leaving security bases where they were doing construction work and to shops declining to serve members of the security forces.

The campaign is based on a strategy carried out with success during the Irish War of Independence in the early part of this century when the Royal Irish Constabulary was isolated from the community and driven from its barracks.

The IRA made its first public threat against those working for the security forces in June 1985 when it warned people working on a new RUC base at Lisnagelvin in Londonderry. In August that year, Seamus McEvoy, a Catholic, was shot dead in a Dublin bar because, the IRA alleged, he had been supplying materials to security bases.

Three days later, the IRA apologised to the family of Daniel Mullen, who had also been shot dead in a bar at Strabane, Co Tyrone. They said he had been killed in mistake for a prominent Protestant building contractor. The Provisionals' campaign has forced the Royal Engineers to carry out urgent repairs to bombed bases, and a £200 million programme to build safe housing for the security forces had to be undertaken secretly to protect workers.

Stalled initiative, page 4
Letters, page 11

Yeltsin tries to defuse army anger

FROM MARY DEJEVSKY IN MOSCOW

MORE than 6,000 disgruntled officer-delegates of the former Soviet army, meeting in the Kremlin yesterday, gave their political leaders such a stormy reception that their commander-in-chief, Marshal Yevgeni Shaposhnikov, had to deny a military coup was imminent.

Despite valiant attempts by President Yeltsin of Russia, Marshal Shaposhnikov, and the Kazakhstan president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to keep the meeting under control, the mood was ugly, reflecting deep unhappiness in the armed forces after the decline and dissolution of the Soviet Union. The officers heard Mr Yeltsin appeal to them to keep the peace across the country and Marshal Shaposhnikov pledged that the army would not allow itself to be used for political ends.

In his opening address, the marshal felt the need to deny that the outcome would be a military coup. "Claims that the all-army meeting may result in a military coup are

groundless and socially dangerous. I will never allow the armed forces to be used against the people."

When the conference opened, there was consternation that Mr Yeltsin and Mr Nazarbayev were the only two presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States who had bothered to turn up. The lack of consensus was such that the conference proceeded with no agenda, standing orders or time limit.

At one point, Marshal Shaposhnikov strode off the platform, announcing his resignation, after calls from the floor for his removal. He was called back by Mr Yeltsin and explained that he would remain only if the officers felt he could do something to help.

In his earlier speech, Marshal Shaposhnikov had given a warning that "global tragedy" threatened if the future of the former Soviet armed forces was not settled quickly. "Events have reached the boundary beyond which lie feeding, chaos and national, if not global, tragedy." But Marshal Shaposhnikov, who called for retention of a single armed force with a transitional period of "two, three or four years", was heard with cool hostility. Even the popular Mr Yeltsin attracted lukewarm applause. His only



Under fire: President Yeltsin and Marshal Shaposhnikov consult during their Kremlin brush with the officer corps

spontaneous ovation came when he promised land and dollars to officers who wanted to build their own houses.

The two most popular speakers were Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk, who cited the glorious tradition of St George the warrior and Alek-

sandr Nevsky, and Colonel Viktor Alksnis, one of the conservative firebrands of the dissolved Soviet parliament. Colonel Alksnis said: "Our homeland no longer exists — our homeland was the USSR." The commonwealth was "a fiction".

While the platform was calling for calm, the mass of officers in the hall were calling for retention of a single high command, a single armed force, and even restoration of the Soviet Union.

Mr Yeltsin's announcement that the commonwealth

would have its own navy did little to pacify officers in revolt against the probability that part of the Black Sea and Caspian fleets would be transferred to Ukraine and to Azerbaijan.

Fighters rally, page 8

Shorter wait for surgery

The maximum waiting time for a hospital operation is to be cut from two years to 18 months under proposals being drawn up by the Conservatives.

The new target is understood to have been provisionally agreed between William Waldegrave, the health secretary, and John Major at last week's Downing Street meeting on the Tory programme for a fourth term. Page 16

£2.5m award

A brain-damaged girl whose only real joy in life is opera stands to receive £2.5 million in damages over 25 years. Page 3

Top draw

In the draw for the European football championships England will meet Sweden, France and Yugoslavia in group one, while Scotland will face Holland and Germany. Page 38

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City dismisses 'blip in the dip' inflation rise

BY COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

INFLATION picked up for the second consecutive month in December. Retail prices rose by an annual 4.5 per cent, up from 4.3 per cent in the previous month, according to government figures.

John Major, who set the fight against inflation as his main objective, said last month that inflation had been "licked" and City economists remain convinced that "headline" inflation is still falling in the long term.

Simon Briscoe, economist at Midland Montagu, the investment bank, dismissed the pickup in retail prices as "the

blip in the [inflationary] dip". Forecasters expect the annual rate to be unchanged this month, before starting to fall again. The government is looking forward to British inflation falling below the German level next month or in March.

There was also an unexpected deterioration in government finances last month, with a PSBR of £1.2 billion, instead of a forecast repayment of £800 million.

Leading article, page 11
Labour's back, page 16
Borrowing rises, page 17

Lottery bill fails but fight goes on

A NATIONAL Lottery remained last night an option for the Conservative election manifesto despite the failure of a backbench Commons attempt to introduce one (Philip Webster writes).

Ivan Lawrence, Conservative MP for Burton, failed to muster 100 votes to enable his national lottery bill to make progress. The government declined to back him in the vote, preferring to wait before deciding whether to make the lottery a manifesto commitment.

Votes held back, page 4

Unrepentant Saddam admits he lost war

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN AMMAN

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein yesterday for the first time acknowledged Iraq's material defeat in the Gulf war, but promised to rebuild his vast military machine.

In a television address on the anniversary of the allied attack on Baghdad, he gave the clearest signal yet that, despite crushing defeat and continuing United Nations sanctions, he has no intention of abandoning his ambition of making Iraq a heavily armed regional superpower.

Relaxed and confident in field marshal's uniform, Saddam acknowledged physical

defeat in the war. But, he insisted, Iraq had won a moral victory over the forces of "Satan and treachery".

His address came after an Iraqi government claim that 187 "military industry buildings" damaged in the war had already been repaired and another 260 unspecified military facilities were now under reconstruction. Western intelligence officials believe Saddam may still have as many as 200 concealed Scud missiles.

Waterloo?, page 10
Leading article, page 11

Eavesdropper tunes into galactic 'gossip'

BY NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE American space agency NASA is about to begin a \$100 million (£58.3 million) search for intelligent life elsewhere in the universe.

The project is the biggest and most intensive effort yet to determine whether we are alone. Since 1960 at least 50 investigations have been carried out, mostly small-scale and all unsuccessful. Steven Spielberg, director of *ET, the Extra-Terrestrial*, gave \$100,000 to finance one project, but it found nothing. Now the big battalions are moving in.

Next week radio and computer equipment will be moved to the Mojave Desert to begin eavesdropping on the galactic airwaves in the hope of picking

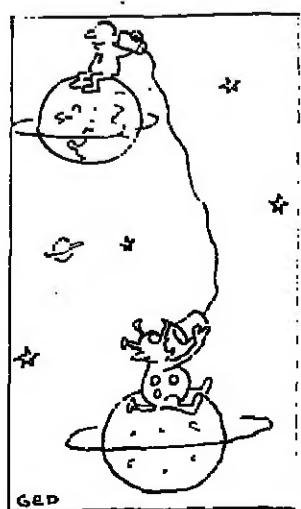
up some extraterrestrial tidbits. The equipment will be set up at NASA's Deep Space Network tracking station at Goldstone, 85 miles northeast of Los Angeles. Later the search will be joined by radio telescopes at the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico, in Canberra, Australia, and in Greenbank, West Virginia. The search will last ten years.

The searchers believe that if there are intelligent beings in space, they will be generating radio noise that ought to be detectable. It might be a signal deliberately broadcast into space in the hope of attracting attention, or simply the dying echo of an extraterrestrial television or radio channel. NASA's new equipment promises to be 10 million times more effective than anything tried before. Michael Klein, of NASA's Jet Propulsion

Laboratory, announcing the start of the programme, said that the evidence was that countless Earth-like planets exist in our galaxy. "I strongly believe that some day we will make contact with other civilisations," he said. The new equipment would be able within a few minutes to match all of the searches that had gone before.

NASA's search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI) will systematically search the sky for transmissions in the 1 to 10 gigahertz range, where natural sources are quietest. The targeted search will look at roughly 1,000 sun-like stars that lie within 100 light years of us, while the sky survey will look at the entire sky but with lower sensitivity. The survey will be formally launched on

Continued on page 16, col 8



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Loophole on poll tax worries power chiefs

By DOUGLAS BROOM
LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

GAS and electricity companies may be prevented from cutting off supplies to debtors if anti-poll tax campaigners succeed in their legal challenge to the use of computer records in court.

The Home Office is looking into the threat to the public utilities posed by a series of test cases brought by anti-poll tax groups over the admissibility of computerised records in civil proceedings before magistrates. The utilities use computerised payment records as evidence that customers have not paid their bills when seeking court orders allowing them to enter homes and turn off supplies.

A stipendiary magistrate at Clerkenwell in north London is due to rule next week on a case brought by Camden

council against a poll tax default. The case is regarded as a test of the arguments about computer records.

Lawyers from the Poll Tax Legal Group have argued that computer records amount to "hearsay evidence" and therefore cannot be used to prove non-payment. Both sides say that they will appeal to the High Court if they lose.

Gas and electricity companies are concerned that a High Court ruling in favour of the anti-poll tax groups would invalidate their own use of computer payment records in the courts.

In the Commons, Bryan Gould, the shadow environment secretary said that the delays caused by the legal confusion would push up poll tax bills next year. He demanded a government statement on what action ministers proposed to take.

"The extra problems councils now face mean that poll tax bills could be even higher next year as councils will be forced to pass the cost of government incompetence on to next year's poll tax bills," he said. His call for action was echoed by the main local authority associations, which called for a meeting with John Patien, Home Office minister of state.

Rita Taylor, chairman of the Association of District Councils finance committee, accused ministers of "dilly-dallying" while councils faced "massive losses in revenue". She said that councils had to issue summonses within two years of the debt arising. If the hearings dragged out until the spring it would be impossible to bring some cases, which would be "catastrophic" for many councils.

The Home Office said yesterday that councils should continue to take cases to court if they believed that they could prove the debt had not been paid. Environment ministers and Home Office officials spent much of yesterday discussing possible solutions while more poll tax cases were halted. At Hackney, east London magistrates adjourned a further 1,300 cases indefinitely, bringing to more than 5,000 the number now halted pending a ruling.

Jesuits condemn council tax

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE council tax, the government's replacement for the community charge, will still place an unfair burden on the poor, according to a report by a Jesuit scholar.

Father Chris Moss, Dean of St Edmund's Roman Catholic College, Cambridge, will publish a study on Wednesday arguing that while the new tax is a significant improvement, what is needed is a "truly progressive tax" for local government.

He writes of concern that the ratios between property values are greater than the planned ratios of tax liability in the new tax, to be implemented in April next year. He proposes a supplementary local income tax and an increase in benefits for the poor.

"What is needed is an immediate substantial increase in income support-related benefits if the government is not to fail in its grave obligation to protect the most vulnerable in society."

The report, by the Von Hugel Institute, a research body based at St Edmund's, has been sent to Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary. MPs and bishops in advance of a parliamentary debate. The Council Tax, the most comprehensive Christian critique of the new tax to date, cites the biblical mandate to care for the weakest in society. "The Old Testament prophets forcefully condemned the selfish accumulation of wealth at the expense of others."

Father Moss says: "The incidents in the Gospels which refer directly to taxation also highlight the concern of Jesus for the poor and for justice."

He adds: "The combination of inadequate benefit and regressive taxation has brought many low income families into court for the first time. With few exceptions, the people being imprisoned are poor."

"It is not good enough to argue that there will be winners and losers," he says.

Labour's plan will hit 8.7% of families

By JILL SHERMAN
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ONLY 8.7 per cent of families in the United Kingdom will lose under Labour's proposals to remove the National Insurance Contribution ceilings and introduce its spending pledges, according to an independent study published yesterday.

Forty-six per cent of families will gain from the proposals and 44 per cent will be unaffected, the analysis of Labour's tax changes by the Institute of Fiscal Studies shows.

Roy Hattersley, deputy leader of the Labour party said yesterday that almost 90 per cent of the population would be wholly unaffected by the taxes.

However, the report confirms that families will be hit most in London and the South-East. In Greater London 38 per cent of families will gain, 15 per cent will lose and 47 per cent will be unaffected, while in the southeast 45 per cent gain, 13 per cent lose and 42 per cent are unaffected.

The biggest gainers are in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Northern regions.

Steve Webb, a researcher at the institute, said that one of the main effects of the changes would be to redistribute income from the rich to the poor. Further analysis shows that if the population is divided up into tenths by income level (weighted to take into account the extra costs of families with more children) more families gain than lose except for the top 20 per cent.

The institute has offered two sets of figures, one based on abolition of NICs for all workers, the other excluding self-employed. The figures above exclude self-employed.

The report makes it unclear which policy Labour would adopt, but senior Labour sources insisted last night that their policy had always been to exclude self-employed people from their proposals to abolish NIC ceilings.

Mr Webb said that the exclusion of self-employed workers would cost the party the difference between £3.2 billion and £2.7 billion. However, Labour said they had always used £2.7 billion for costing purposes.

Ministers attacked Labour last night. John MacGregor, the Commons leader, said: "Every taxpayer at every level of earnings would be hit."

Labour challenge, page 16



Stars in transit: Roy of the Rovers, left, and, right, Dan Dare and Judge Dredd, the comic-book characters bought by the Gutenberg Group from the wreckage of the Maxwell empire

Roy of the Rovers goes Danish

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE footballing world was horrified yesterday when it learned that Roy of the Rovers, Melchester's ever-popular striker, has been transferred to a Danish team for an undisclosed fee.

Roy and a team of other famous cartoon characters including Dan Dare and Judge Dredd, have been bought by Gutenberg Group, a Danish publisher, from the wreckage of the late Robert Maxwell's media empire.

Gutenberg has bought Fleetway Editions, Britain's largest comic book publisher, from Price Waterhouse, the accountancy firm that is handling the administration

of Maxwell Communication Corporation.

The Danish company already owned half of the company which it bought in a joint venture deal with Mr Maxwell last October. His death and the collapse of his companies have allowed Gutenberg to buy the remainder of the shares at a knock-down price, thought to be around £5 million.

Fleetway has annual sales of £15 million and profits of more than £2 million. Among others it publishes 2000 AD, one of Britain's most successful comics, with more than a million readers. The company's most valuable asset is Judge Dredd.



the vicious and cynical policeman of a post-nuclear New York, soon to star in his own film.

The sale is part of the dismemberment of the Maxwell businesses in an effort to repay some of their estimated debts of £3 billion. Accountants throughout the City are holding private auctions of Maxwell businesses.

In a separate move Addison Consultancy has announced that it is buying the British businesses of AGB Research, to form the largest market research group in the country. AGB was owned by the Maxwell family's private companies, now in the hands of Arthur Andersen.

Andersen is keen to complete disposals quickly to repay some of the bank debt, but is having rather more difficulty selling a 51 per cent stake in Mirror Group Newspapers.

Yesterday SG Warburg, the merchant bank, announced it was withdrawing as a potential buyer for the company.

The Court of Appeal yesterday reserved judgment on the case in which Kevin Maxwell is seeking to uphold his right to remain silent in the face of questioning about the missing Maxwell millions.

Letters, page 11

Halford case chief appointed

A senior South Wales policeman is to investigate new allegations against Alison Halford, assistant chief constable of Merseyside (Stewart Tindler writes).

Miss Halford has been accused of "discreditable conduct" in making "abusive and personally insulting" late-night telephone calls to the chief constable, an assistant chief constable, and to the chairman and deputy chairman of the Merseyside police authority. The allegations will be investigated by David Mellor, deputy chief constable of South Wales.

Last month, a High Court judge ruled that Merseyside unlawfully suspended Miss Halford in 1990 after a receiving a report on her conduct by Sussex police. But last week the suspension was renewed and details of the allegations published.

Yesterday Rex Makin, her solicitor, said: "Undoubtedly, people who feel themselves to be persecuted react in a certain way. The whole thing has now become reminiscent of the Derek Hanton days when Liverpool was called 'Tox Town'. He was angry that the confidential discussion of the earlier allegations was leaked to the media."

Fire bombs found in pub

Two fire bombs were found in the Marquis of Granby public house in Shaftesbury Avenue, central London, yesterday. Police said they had ignited some time ago, but fizzled out. They are believed to have been planted at the same time as IRA firebombs that damaged the nearby Cambridge public house last year. Unexploded bombs were also found later in a book shop and a Tube train.

The devices hidden behind bench seats in the Marquis of Granby were found by workers on a refurbishment project.

Back sufferer awaits verdict

Judgment has been reserved until next week in the case in which a back pain "lie detector" machine was used for the first time to support a horsewoman's claim against a driver who crashed into her.

Annette Durrant, aged 34, of Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, is seeking £250,000 from Alexander McDonald of Allesley Park, Coventry, for injuries suffered after the accident in 1987. Mr McDonald had admitted liability to the High Court in Birmingham, but his insurers contest the amount of damages.

Victim's son faints in court

THE teenage son of an alleged murder victim collapsed in court yesterday while listening to grisly details of his mother's killing.

David Robertson, aged 16, was in court in Malaga as his stepfather's confession to the brutal murder of Aberdeen-born Alice Hutchinson was read out. As he was helped from court, he shouted in Spanish to his stepfather Stuart Hutchinson: "You beast."

Hutchinson, aged 47, from Hartlepool, is accused of killing and chopping up his wife on the Costa del Sol nearly three years ago.

Minutes earlier, the court had heard an impassioned plea from Mrs Hutchinson's father, James Davidson, aged 71, that his son-in-law be

jailed for life. "I want him put away for ever," Mr Davidson said. Hutchinson, handcuffed and sitting on the other side of the court, stared impassively.

The court was told that on the night of February 20, 1989, Hutchinson had had an argument with his wife at the family villa in the resort of Fuengirola. Mrs Hutchinson had tried to run out of the front door after Hutchinson hit her, but he had dragged her back to the bedroom and hit her half a dozen times with a baseball bat until she died.

In a confession, Hutchinson described in gory detail how he drained his wife's body of blood in the bathroom and set up a makeshift marble slab on which to chop

her up. The task had taken him 40 hours. The court was told that Hutchinson kept his wife's entrails and the 38 bits of her body in buckets in the bathroom overnight before burning them in paint cans in the garden the next day.

Hutchinson claims that his wife left home after a row and went to London.

In his summing up, Valentine Dueno, the state prosecutor, demanded a 25-year jail sentence for Hutchinson.

Hutchinson's lawyer, Pedro Apalategui, called for acquittal because no body had been found and Hutchinson had not had legal advice when he confessed.

A panel of three judges will give a verdict, expected within a fortnight.

Sulphur 'cuts global warming'

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

SULPHUR emissions from power stations and industry have slowed the rate of global warming, an international meeting of climate specialists has concluded.

By reflecting the heat of the sun back into space, tiny sulphate particles have counteracted the effects of greenhouse gases and reduced global warming by up to 20 per cent, scientists who advise the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change believe.

The 130 scientists from 47 countries who have just ended a meeting in Canton in China concluded that global warming is likely to be rather slower than earlier predictions, so long as sulphur emissions continue. However, because sulphur pollution causes acid rain, efforts are now being made to reduce it — and doing so is likely to accelerate global warming.

Lords seek rise in Sunday trade fine

By JOHN WINDER

THE House of Lords last night voted by 26 votes to 20 for a huge increase in fines for illegal Sunday trading, but the private member's bill containing the £50,000 proposed fine has no hope of passing into law in face of government opposition in a session truncated by the forthcoming election.

Viscount Brentford, chairman of the Keep Sunday Special Campaign, moving the

second reading of the bill, said that the present fine was £1,000, to be increased to £2,500 in October.

The debate became uncharacteristically bitter at times, especially when Lord Lucas of Chilworth, Conservative, called the bill mean and miserable. Lord Brentford said he would much rather be supporting a government bill for reforming Sunday trading on a basis of consensus. Law-breaking by retailers was a deliberate flouting of the criminal law.

The Bishop of Liverpool, Rt Rev David Sheppard, said that the government had a big share in responsibility for the present state of the law.

Lady O'Carroll, a director of Tesco and a committed Christian, found Sunday trading a difficult personal issue. The strongest possible efforts should be made to ensure that those who did not want to work on Sundays should not have to. She opposed the bill.

O'Carroll: "Difficult issue" for a Christian

Duchess in racism dispute

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE Duchess of York has walked into a new controversy by agreeing to attend a dinner-dance at a Florida club accused of excluding blacks and Jews.

Already besieged by questions about her relationship with a Texas oilman, the duchess has accepted an invitation to a banquet tonight at the Everglades Club in Palm Beach, a watering hole for the rich and famous.

Local Jewish activists complain that the club prevents Jews from joining or visiting members there. Among prominent Jews said to have been turned away are Leonard Bernstein and Estee Lauder. "The Everglades Club

has for decades maintained restrictive membership policies against Jews, blacks and others on the basis of their group identity," said Arthur Teitelbaum, regional director of the Anti-Defamation League. "They have an ugly, nasty history."

"Bigotry wears many suits of clothes. In some cases it is a hood and a sheet and in others it is the refined clothing of the upper class. The disease is the same, and anti-Semitism is surely a disease."

The Anti-Defamation League complained to the British embassy in Washington but was told that the duchess was taking up a private invitation and that her

presence did not imply endorsement of the club's membership policies.

The dinner-dance is being given by a socialite named Maggy Scherer in honour of the actress Stefanie Powers and her pet social cause, the William Holden Wildlife Fund. The guest list is said to include several Jews, although it was not known how many planned to attend.

The controversy follows publication of photographs showing the Duchess of York with Steve Wyatt, the adopted son of a Texas oil tycoon, during a Mediterranean holiday in 1990.

Alan Hamilton, page 10

A WEEK ON THE NILE

Aboard the first-class MS Ra from £495

The MS Ra
Recently built in Britain the MS Ra is a large purpose-built Nile cruiser that can accommodate up to 140 passengers. She is an excellently designed, sleek vessel offering all the benefits of modern high technology. Facilities on board include a large restaurant, lounge, bar, sun viewing deck with swimming pool, jacuzzi, and a small health club. The cabin accommodation is

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Free bank notes for readers

READERS of The Times and The Sunday Times who have started a collection of foreign banknotes after the launch last week of the Sunday Times International Currency Collection will receive two more free notes on Sunday Monday.

A Peruvian 1,000 Intis note will be given away with The Sunday Times Magazine tomorrow and on Monday a Brazilian 1,000 Cruzeiro note will be given away with The Times.

The bank notes can be mounted in a special album which will be given away in The Sunday Times Magazine on January 26 and on February 2.

Details of how to obtain a presentation wallet of further notes to be added to the collection will be published.

Pavarotti fan aged 5 awarded £2.5m for birth blunder

A BRAIN-DAMAGED girl whose only real joy in life is opera — and Pavarotti in particular — stands to receive more than £2.5 million damages over the next 25 years.

A High Court judge who approved the damages settlement for Alexandra Mulligan, aged five, was told by Michael Brent, her QC, yesterday that the child had a calming effect on her. Mr Justice Rousfield said: "She can tell Pavarotti from Domingo. She has good taste."

Now that Alexandra's financial future is secure, her parents plan to buy her a CD player so she can listen to her favourite music in style. The damages to wheelchair-bound Alexandra, who suffered brain injuries through oxygen starvation at birth, will be even higher if she defies doctors' predictions and survives beyond her estimated 30-year life span.

The structured settlement, based on annually-increasing investment income, was agreed with Merton and Sutton health authority, responsible for St Helier's hospital,

Carshalton, Surrey, where Alexandra was born. She now lives with her family at Alwoodley, Leeds.

The health authority admitted liability for Alexandra's injuries, which left her handicapped with cerebral palsy, unable to speak and needing constant care. Doctors estimate she will live for another 25 years. Money invested over that period will result in her receiving £2,529,962. Michael and Avril Mulligan, her parents, believe she will live longer. Should she survive to the age of 60, she would receive more than £16 million.

After yesterday's agreement, Mr and Mrs Mulligan talked of the unexpected discovery of their daughter's love of opera. Neither was an opera fan, but they noticed during the televising of the soccer World Cup that she responded when she heard Pavarotti singing the Nessun Dorma theme tune.

"She just loved it," Mrs Mulligan said. "We bought the record for her and she loved the other side as well. So

we started buying more opera tapes. She obviously likes some more than others, but her musical taste is definitely in this direction. As far as stars are concerned, she definitely shows a preference for Pavarotti."

Mr and Mrs Mulligan, who were praised in court for their devotion to their daughter, have taken her to performances of *Carmen* and *Madame Butterfly*. So far, they have worn out four cassette players. Now, Mrs Mulligan said, the aim was to buy a sophisticated CD player.

Mrs Mulligan, a physiotherapist, has also received compensation for what happened at Alexandra's birth in April 1986. She was awarded £3,500 agreed damages at an earlier court hearing for the pain, injury and loss she suffered.

The family of a "charismatic" Baptist minister who died at the hands of a drink driver two years ago won a damages award in the High Court estimated at £200,000.

Judge Diamond, QC, said of the Rev John Raynes: "He was a man of quite exceptional qualities both as a spiritual leader, preacher and pastor and as a husband and father."

John Raynes was not a man to whom financial rewards were a matter of any significance — he had a remarkable capacity to inspire and counsel all those with whom he came into contact. He had, moreover, a remarkable talent as a preacher and a particular gift for ministering to children. He had a charisma which appealed to many people and could preach in a manner which reached and touched many kinds of people wherever they were."

The court heard Mr Raynes died when a minibus struck his car on the Twerton to Combe Down Road near Bath on November 13, 1989. He left a widow, Rosemary, now aged 48, and three children — Timothy, 20, Andrew, 19 and Stephen, nine.

Michael Godfrey, the minibus driver, of Keynsham, Bristol, was later convicted of causing death by reckless driving and driving with excess alcohol.



Firemen, top, putting out the blaze at Lord Cheshire's cottage at Greatham, Hampshire, yesterday. left, Lord Cheshire recovering in hospital, and, right, as a bomber pilot in the second world war

Cheshire, VC, escapes house fire

THE war hero Lord Cheshire, VC, told yesterday of his escape from a fire in a cottage where he was sleeping.

Looking relaxed and cheerful, the former Group Captain, Leonard Cheshire, sat up in bed in hospital at Basingstoke, Hampshire, where he was taken after inhaling smoke, and said: "I feel fine." Lord Cheshire, aged 74, is expected to leave the hospital today.

Lord Cheshire, who took part in 100 bombing missions in the second world war, had gone to a rural cottage in the grounds of the Le Court Cheshire Foundation Home, near Liss,

Hampshire, to write an article defending "Bomber" Harris. An electric blanket he had put on to air a bed for his daughter Gigi — due to stay with him — caught fire and Lord Cheshire escaped from his bedroom through a window to a porch ledge.

Lord Cheshire waited there barefoot in the cold for 25 minutes waiting for the fire brigade to arrive and managed to grab his dressing gown through the open window, but left his slippers behind. "I remember saying to myself 'Get your priorities right,'" he said. "I was thinking, 'Forget your slippers.' I have read about people in

disaster situations and I have often read that people have gone back for one thing and that has been their undoing."

Lord Cheshire said that, in need of a restful night, he had unplugged the telephone "like a fool" so that he would not be disturbed. He woke about 4am to hear a noise that, at first, he thought was an intruder, before realising that it was a fire when he felt the heat.

The lights were not working, but, fumbling in the dark, he had managed to plug in the telephone and call the fire brigade as smoke began to enter his room.

As Lord Cheshire recovered from effects of smoke inhaled into his only lung — one was removed during the war after he contracted TB — he shrugged off his brush with death as "just another event" in an eventful life.

He said: "It's lucky I'm a light sleeper. I'd been asleep for six hours when I woke — three more minutes, then I would have been in trouble." He added: "I never realised what effect smoke has ... It comes right into you."

Lord Cheshire yesterday contacted his wife, Sue Ryder, his fellow charity worker, by fax in Poland to tell her what had happened.

Big Mac protesters chew over latest setback

BY RAY CLANCY

THE McDonald's fast-food chain has won the latest round in its fight to open a burger restaurant in the affluent London suburb of Hampstead.

Camden council has conceded that planning permission granted in 1988 for the High Street premises now leased by McDonald's is still valid, delivering a severe blow to residents who oppose the burger company's arrival. Paul Preston, president of the company's UK operation, said: "I am delighted and we are now proceeding full speed ahead."

McDonald's has still some way to go, however. The council says that the company must still seek planning permission for the restaurant frontage and for the installation of a ventilation plant and equipment. The application will go before the development sub-committee, and opposition is expected to be vigorous.

Residents object on the grounds that the restaurant will not fit in with Hampstead's village atmosphere and will create a litter problem. Pamela Shipley, of the Heath and Old Hampstead Society, which has campaigned against the move, said: "We can't understand it. We are continuing to take legal advice because we think that Camden has got it wrong."

The council accepted that planning permission for a burger restaurant at the premises, at present a book shop, was still valid after McDonald's threatened to take action in the High Court. It had previously invited the company to seek a formal clarification.

Mr Preston said: "Camden recognised that the position we took initially was sound and valid. I am just happy that we didn't have to take this thing further, wasting taxpayers' money."

Mr Preston said that McDonald's would consult with English Heritage and council planners to find a suitable design for the frontage.

Leading article, page 11



Opera lover: Mrs Mulligan with Alexandra

Police deny promotion race bias

A POLICEMAN who was repeatedly rejected for promotion was trying too hard to achieve the rank of inspector, an industrial tribunal was told in Leeds yesterday.

Sergeant Raham Khan failed four times to be promoted despite having the full backing of his senior officers. After his last unsuccessful application in 1991 he said he believed his racial origin was being held against him, because less qualified white candidates were promoted ahead of him.

Roger Emm, for West Yorkshire police, told the tribunal it was not unusual for officers to fail four times to become an inspector. The man who headed the final interview panel, Chief Supt Stuart Clough, said: "I definitely did not take his racial background into consideration. I badly wanted him to become an inspector but he gave a bad interview."

Sergeant Khan, of Allerton, Bradford, claims racial discrimination, saying police blocked his promotion because he is Asian.

The hearing was adjourned until March 11, when a ruling will be given.

New gold case jury warned

THE trial of four men and a woman accused of laundering proceeds of the £26 million Brink's-Mat robbery began for the second time yesterday with the new jury being warned to ignore speculation about why the last one collapsed.

Michael Austin-Smith, for the prosecution, told the jury: "Some of you may have read in the press about how this trial, being tried before another jury, came to a standstill last November. Some of you may have read the press speculation about the reasons why, much of it inaccurate. Please put it entirely out of your minds. What happened in November has nothing at all to do with this case."

He added: "Please do not let anything you read then adversely affect you as far as these defendants are concerned."

The court was told that profits from Britain's biggest bullion robbery were laundered at a rate of £1 million a month. Huge sums were paid into banks in cash and then "washed" through accounts throughout the world.

Gordon Parry, aged 47, a property dealer, of Westernham, Kent, denies charges of handling proceeds of the robbery. Brian Perry, aged 51, of Biggin Hill, Kent; Jean Savage, 46, a tobacconist, of West Kingsdown, Kent; Patrick Clark, 50, a property developer, of Chingford, east London, and Stephen Clark, 23, a restaurateur, of Chingford, all deny one charge of plotting to handle the robbery proceeds.

Jail rioter 'acted like wild animal'

BY RONALD FAUX

AN ALLEGED ringleader of the Strangeways riot was like a wild animal, screaming abuse and stripped to the waist, as he unlocked cells and violence swept through the jail, Manchester crown court was told yesterday.

Lawrence Murphy, a prison officer at Strangeways, said that he saw Paul Taylor, aged 24, who is charged with murder and riot, "high as a kite" with a set of prison keys. "He came round above me on the top of A4 landing and he looked me in the face. He said 'Right, you bastard, I'm the boss now. I have got the f... g keys.'"

Taylor opened the gate leading to A4 landing and unlocked doors and cells on the left-hand side before moving across to the right-hand side, Mr Murphy said. Prisoners came from their cells and started throwing debris into the well of the block. Mr Murphy said that prison staff had twice been warned that there might be trouble and all inmates not attending church service on Sunday, April 1, had been locked in their cells.

David Mitchell, a "trustworthy" prisoner at Strangeways when the riot broke out, said that he heard shouting and the smashing of glass outside his cell on the Sunday morning. His cell door was opened. "I could not believe it when I saw Paul Taylor with cell keys," he said. He saw Taylor working quickly along the row of cells in C wing. He had another prisoner with him "lifting the tally to see if anyone was in the cells".

As hundreds of prisoners left their cells and clambered on to scaffolding, Mitchell was told someone had been taken up to the gallery and was to be thrown off.

A row of cells in C wing held segregated prisoners including sex offenders. A prisoner went to one cell and said to Mr Mitchell: "Look in here, he has hung himself." Mr Mitchell said: "I could see a prisoner hanging by his neck with a shirt or tie tied to the bars."

Five men face murder and riot charges, three others are accused of riot. The hearing continues on Monday.

Ode brings island solace

BY BILL FROST

BEETHOVEN has emerged as an easy winner in a casaway hit parade compiled by the producers of *Desert Island Discs* to celebrate the programme's half century.

"Ode to Joy" from his Ninth Symphony was a clear favourite among those consigned to a palm-fringed isolation over the past 50 years.

With two more top 20 hits, Beethoven dominates the chart which has few concessions to 20th-century music, apart from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. "Mozart fails to feature at all, which is very surprising," a programme spokesman said.

Margaret Thatcher, while still leader of the Opposition, showed catholic choice in her selection. Among her choices were *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes* and *Introducing Tobac-*

co To Civilisation, a comic monologue by Bob Newhart. Neil Kinnock chose a recording of "Horace the Horse", performed by his daughter Rachel when she was two.

As the BBC made final preparations for a celebrity party to mark the anniversary, John Major yesterday became the first serving prime minister to sit in the castaway's deckchair. The programme will be broadcast a week tomorrow.

Desert Island Discs Top 20:

1, Beethoven *O Freunde, nicht diese töne* (Ode to Joy); 2, Debussy *Clair de Lune*; 3, Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance*; 4, Wagner *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde*; 5, Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*; 6, Bach/Gounod *Ave Maria*; 7, Mendelssohn's

Nocturne from A Midsummer Night's Dream; 8, Beethoven *Symphony No 5*; 9, "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's *Messiah*; 10, Verdi "Dies Irae" from the *Requiem*.

11, Elgar *Cello Concerto*; 12, Beethoven *Piano Concerto No 5* third movement; 13, *Finale* from Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*; 14, Rachmaninov *Rhapsody on a theme from Paganini*; 15, Gounod *Sanctus*.

16, Elgar *Nimrod* from the *Enigma Variations*; 17, Vaughan Williams *Fantasia on Greensleeves*; 18, Bach *Double Concerto* for two violins and orchestra in D minor; 19, Wagner *Ride of the Valkyries*; 20, Charles Trenet *La Mer*.

Weekend Times

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The good hospital guide

Where in Britain are the shortest hospital queues? Tomorrow The Sunday Times Good Hospital Guide will reveal how long you can expect to wait for your operation. The exclusive analysis



will also help you to decide when it's worth going private. As the debate over the state of the NHS becomes a key election issue, The Sunday Times offers an expert diagnosis. For the good of your health, read it

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Brooke envisages defeat for his stalled Ulster initiative



Brooke: prospects of advance receding

PETER Brooke, the Northern Ireland secretary, perhaps making one of his last significant contributions to Irish politics, all but admitted yesterday that his latest talks-about-talks venture has collapsed.

Speaking in Dublin after meeting Gerry Collins, the Irish foreign minister, he told the city's chamber of commerce: "The prospects of advance recede. The uncertainties of the outcome of the election, on the one hand, and the need on the other for a process of this kind to have a reasonable chance of continuing to a conclusion, provide understandable obstacles to progress now." The main problem this time has been the reluctance of unionists to commit themselves to continuing negotiations with the Social Democratic

The Northern Ireland talks have lasted two years. How far have they progressed and where do the parties stand? Edward Gorman reports

and Labour party after the general election if Labour wins.

Unionist leaders argue that given Labour's stated intention of working towards "unity by consent" in Ireland, they would be foolish to commit themselves in advance. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist party MP for Upper Bann, made clear that no amount of reassurance from Kevin McNamara, the shadow Northern Ireland secretary, this side of an election, would suffice. His party would need to talk to Labour in power to decide realistically whether to continue. That is a basic stumbling block which was

foreseen by everybody — particularly the Northern Ireland Office — well before Mr Brooke tried to restart the process in December.

It calls into question the wisdom of attempting that restart in a period fraught with such uncertainties, especially given the tendency of the two main participants to look for any excuse to avoid coming to the table. One suspects Mr Brooke — about whom there is increasing speculation that he will not return to Stormont whatever the result of the election — may not have believed himself that real progress was possible before the election. He may have been

goaded into action by an upsurge in violence during the autumn.

The breakdown has demonstrated again that the political will Mr Brooke has so often tried to imagine exists for reconciliation between unionists and nationalists still does not exist. The breakdown must also have serious implications for future policy. More than two years of failure in reaching consensus suggests that simply resurrecting the Brooke formula after the election will achieve nothing but more stalemate in the long run.

Critics of government policy from different viewpoints might argue that now is the time to abandon the search for power-sharing devolution and revert to unionist-backed integration policies or, conversely, push ahead

with the Anglo-Irish agreement over the heads of the parties.

A more likely possibility is for the government to have another go at legislating a solution, something which John Alderdice, leader of the Northern Ireland Alliance party, again called for yesterday. He said that a future government should draw up legislation outlining a settlement based on Mr Brooke's researches and then, after consultation, start to make it a reality in Belfast.

□ A part-time member of the Ulster Defence Regiment and three former members, all from Ballymoney in Co Antrim, appeared in court in Belfast yesterday on terrorist charges and were remanded in custody for a month.

Letters, page 11



Collins met Brooke in Dublin yesterday

National lottery bill collapses after MPs hold back their votes

By Robert Morgan, Parliamentary Staff

A PRIVATE member's bill to allow the setting up of a national lottery fell at the first fence in the Commons yesterday. MPs failed to turn out in sufficient numbers to back it and a technical "closure" motion to end the debate failed to get through when fewer than 100 MPs voted for it. The voting was 84 to 35.

The government indicated scepticism about the bill, although Peter Lloyd, Home Office minister, did not rule out a lottery and promised an urgent study. He said that before the law was changed there had to be wide consulta-

tions. The bill was introduced by Ivan Lawrence, a barrister and MP for Burton, to a House unusually crowded for a Friday. He tried to counter the arguments against a lottery from pools promoters, the anti-gambling fraternity and those speaking for small charities, who feared that they would lose income from their own local draws.

Mr Lawrence said that millions of players would take part and about £3 billion could be raised every year. This would be split between prize money, money for the beneficiaries, and adminis-

trative expenses and tax. It would provide much-needed funds to support sport, the arts and charities.

The bill was backed by the Sports Council and the Arts Council and many other sporting and cultural bodies.

Mr Lawrence rejected the "old-fashioned" view that the poor had to be protected from wasting their money on gambling — the contention of the 19th century moralists who ended national lotteries in Britain in 1826. He discounted the pools companies' fears that they would have to shed jobs. He predicted a national lottery creating up to 18,500 jobs with many tickets sold through corner shops and sub-post offices, giving them much-needed income.

Peter Kilfoyle, Labour MP for Liverpool Walton, was the first of several MPs from Merseyside, home of the football pools industry, to criticise the bill. He called it a "dog's breakfast". David Alton, the Liberal Democrat from Liverpool Moseley Hill, said it gambled with people's jobs and promoted an Alice in Wonderland game.

Denis Howell, a former Labour sports minister, and Sir Richard Luce, a former Tory arts minister, backed the bill.

Mr Lloyd said that any bill to allow a national lottery had to contain provisions on how it was to be run, how the revenue was to be divided up and who was to be in control. Mr Lawrence's measure did not contain these provisions.

But he added: "The government sees attraction in the concept of a national lottery and we wish to examine further the issues which it raises."

□ A bill being rushed through Parliament to impose tougher penalties on joyriders after a spate of incidents last year was designed to impress newspapers rather than depress potential criminals. Lord Morris of Castle Morris, speaking for the Opposition, told the Lords.

Lady Mallett (Labour) said that a proper response would have been to increase maximum penalties for the basic offences of taking a vehicle and allowing oneself to be carried in an illegally-taken vehicle. The bill was bad law and ineffective.

However, the Aggravated Vehicle-Taking bill was given an unopposed second reading.

Care man jailed for sex abuse

By Kerry Gill

A COUNCIL care worker was jailed for five years yesterday for sexually abusing mentally handicapped men and women in his charge. Allan Stephen, aged 44, a married man with two children, hid behind a mask of respectability for eight years before being caught, the High Court at Stonehaven, Grampian, was told.

Lord Marnoch, the judge, said: "This was a gross breach of trust, the emotional and other consequences of which are quite incalculable." Stephen, now dismissed from Grampian social work department, had been a care officer for 20 years and also looked after his wheelchair-bound wife, who suffered from multiple sclerosis, the court was told.

Stephen, of Aberdeen, admitted sex offences involving two women and two men. They included taking indecent photographs of one woman. The offences came to light when a victim told another handicapped woman to be careful of Stephen because he was "sexy".

Andrew Lamb, for the defence, said: "I understand that with the onset of his wife's condition, their own relationship necessarily changed and that is the only explanation he can give."

John Morris, advocate depute, said that it seemed that Stephen had told his victims that any complaint they made would not be believed.

Ford puts 3.7% on car prices

By Kevin Eason, Motoring Correspondent

FORD is to increase prices by an average 3.7 per cent within days of the publication of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into car prices which are claimed to be 30 per cent higher in Britain than abroad.

Peter Lilley, trade and industry secretary, is expected to publish the findings of the commission's 18-month enquiry next week. However, Ford has already decided to increase the cost of its cars across the board from January 27 to head off rising costs at its big plants.

The move was criticised yesterday by the head of Swan National, one of Britain's biggest rental and leasing companies, which buys 35,000 new vehicles a year, including many Fords.

Freddie Aldous, chairman and chief executive, said: "This is the fourth price increase since January 1991. It is irresponsible if the motor manufacturing industry in the UK continues to increase vehicle prices year after year well in excess of annual inflation."

Mr Aldous, also a vice-chairman of the British Vehicle Rental and Leasing Association, added: "I urge all vehicle manufacturers to act responsibly to keep future price increases to a minimum, as all their customers are having to do."

Ford said the price rises would apply across Europe.



A stitch in time: A Romanian student learns textile conservation techniques in Britain that she plans to put into practice in her native country. Viorica-Ioana Sladescu and two colleagues began the six-month visit yesterday by studying work on a tapestry at Hampton Court, London

Publishers attack EC plan

By Louise Hidalgo

EUROPEAN Community proposals to ban the advertising of tobacco and restrict that of other products are a direct attack on the freedom of the press, the European Publishers Council said yesterday.

The council, which represents some of Europe's most powerful publishing concerns, was meeting at Castlemartin, near Dublin, to agree a declaration of concerns stemming from what it sees as "potential interference" from the EC on the advertising of products from tobacco to pharmaceuticals.

It called for the press in Europe to be allowed to regulate its own advertising.

Representatives of the council, whose 19 members

include News International, which owns The Times, are to present the declaration to Jacques Delors, president of the European Commission, at Brussels next month.

The declaration states that advertising content should be left to self-regulation in individual member states. It says that advertising revenues are vital in supporting "pluralism, diversity and the freedom of the press" by allowing it to function profitably and freely, and that a free and independent press is a "fundamental institution in political democracies".

The declaration also covers tariffs on paper, which it calls on the commission to abolish, and readers' right to redress, which it says is upheld by all

its members. Sir Frank Rogers, chairman of the council and deputy chairman of The Daily Telegraph, said that the principle of self-regulation had already proved itself successful in the UK and other member states. A ban on tobacco and alcohol advertising would "severely jeopardise" the commercial viability of magazines and newspapers across Europe.

Japanese Nessie is toast of Scotland

By Harvey Elliott, Travel Correspondent

KUSHI, the monster said to live at the bottom of a deep, dark lake in the north of Japan, is about to become the hero of Scotland by rescuing its tourist industry from the lingering effects of the Gulf war.

When officials from the Scottish Tourist Board went to Japan at the end of last year, they were astonished to discover that almost everyone they met wanted to talk about little but the Loch Ness "monster". Scotland's legendary tourist attraction, the Japanese said, has a relative, which a series of television "presenters" had convinced them was alive and well and living at the bottom of Lake Kiyoshi in Bihoro province.

So great was Japan's interest that the tourist board is mounting two campaigns there, taking with it dozens of green furry toys representing Nessie. The board hopes that they will help to woo Japanese travel agents to send their camera-toting clients who, the Scots are convinced, will stand far more chance of seeing Nessie than her long-lost cousin Kushi.

"We have discovered that the Japanese are interested in the Loch Ness monster, golf, whisky, terrans and Burns in that order," Ian Grant, chairman of the Scottish Tourist Board, said. "Our research shows that all the indications are that the 36,000 Japanese who came to Scotland in 1990 and again in 1991 will rise sharply to over 100,000 by 1994."

The influx of Japanese visitors will not come a moment too soon. Scotland is bracing itself for a sharp fall in the number of English tourists. In 1991 the number of visitors from south of the border increased by almost 20 per cent, while the number of Americans fell by 25 per cent. But the trend which helped to give Scotland the best tourist figures of any part of Great Britain last year is set to go into reverse. When the Channel tunnel is opened in 1994 more English families, especially from the South-east, will head for continental Europe, the Scots fear. That makes the Japanese — and Kushi — even more important.

Thief stole rare birds worth £18,000

A thief travelled to 2005 country houses and garden centres around the country to steal rare birds worth over £18,000, Norwich crown court was told yesterday. Edward Hannibal was caught after he and an accomplice triggered an alarm at Kilmessock Park, a country house in Norfolk.

Hannibal, aged 40, a carpenter of Ware, Hertfordshire, was jailed for 21 months, suspended for two years, after admitting aggravated burglary, trespassing with intent to steal, and having an offensive weapon.

Gordon Brace, aged 22 and unemployed, of Huddersdon, Hertfordshire, who went on two raids, was sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, after admitting similar offences.

Crash escape

A businessman escaped with cuts and bruises after the helicopter he was piloting crashed into a field near Bracknell, Berkshire, and burst into flames. Jim Crockett, aged 37, of Barnet, north London, managed to walk nearly 600 yards to a farmhouse to get help.

Deadly dispute

A woman who set light to her neighbour's house, killing her, because her puppy would not stop barking was cleared of murder at Nottingham crown court. Lillian Ramsay, aged 36, of Eastford, Nottingham, admitted manslaughter and arson and was jailed for ten years.

Forgery charge

A barman appeared before Brent magistrates in north London charged with unlawful possession of 60 million forged Dutch guilders (£20 million). Andrew Thomas Bourke, aged 44, of Willesden, was remanded in custody for a week.

Rapist jailed

A Coventryman was jailed for 15 years at Birmingham crown court after admitting a series of rapes at knife-point. Andrew Singh, aged 31, admitted one charge of attempted rape and four charges of rape over two years.

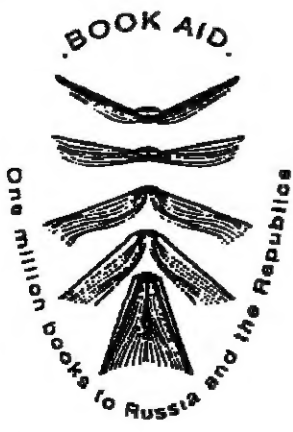
Book lovers pen sequel to Soviet plea of '45

By Matthew D'Ancona

STUDENTS of Russian intellectual life may find Book Aid's invitation to the public to donate books for Russia and the republics next week oddly familiar. This is not the first time that the West has been asked for literary aid by the libraries of the former Soviet Union.

Almost 50 years ago, Margarita Rudomina, founder and director of the Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow, told the Western press that the war-torn Soviet Union needed one million English-language books to restock the libraries of Russia's largest cities, ransacked by Nazi troops.

"Most of what little they left went up in flames during battle or when they torched cities upon the approach of the Red Army," Miss Rudomina told an American reporter in 1945. "There were 40,000 foreign language



books in the Kharkov public library, 15,000 of them in English, and in Rostov there were 17,000 English volumes. They are all gone."

Today, her successors are making a similar plea for help, this time to repair the literary damage wrought by the politics of the cold war. The M.I. Rudomina State Library for Foreign Literature, which changed its name in honour of its founder in 1990, hopes to distribute a million English-language books as Book Aid's Russian partner, 150,000 of which have already arrived in Moscow.

National Book Aid Week lasts from Monday January 20 to Sunday January 26. Books may be handed in at: Heffers, 20 Trinity St. Cambridge; Blackwell, 50 Broad St. Oxford; H.J. Lears, Royal Arcade, Cardiff; Hamrick's, Farnham (both branches); and the following branches of Waterstone's: London: Charing Cross Rd, Croydon, Covent Garden, Hampstead, Kingston upon Thames, Notting Hill Gate, Richmond, Wimbledon; Aberdeen: Bath (4/5 Milson St); Birmingham: Bournbrook; Brighton: Bristol (The Galleries, Broadmead); Canterbury: Cheltenham; Edinburgh: Princes St and George St; Exeter: Exeter; Glasgow (Princes St); Guildford (North St); Lancaster: Leeds (9/10/97 Albion St); Liverpool (52 Bold St); Maidstone:

Manchester (Deansgate and St Ann's Sq); Newcastle: Norwich (St Stephens St); Nottingham: Perth: Preston: Sheffield: Shrewsbury: Stratford upon Avon: Swindon: Winchester: Worcester: York. Books will be collected during the week and brought to London by TNT. Larger book donations: Book Aid warehouse (071 713 7258). Please do not send books to The Times. Cheques payable to Book Aid may be sent c/o Waterstone's Ltd, 37 Leamthorpe Place, London SW3 3QH. Donors and volunteers will be entered into a draw: first prize, return flight to St Petersburg or Moscow, donated by Barry Martin Travel; second prize, case of wine donated by Oddbins; five runners-up £20 book vouchers each, donated by Waterstone's. Winners will be contacted by February 14.

ture, which changed its name in honour of its founder in 1990, hopes to distribute a million English-language books as Book Aid's Russian partner, 150,000 of which have already arrived in Moscow.

Ekatereina Genieva, deputy director of the library, said: "History has a tendency to repeat itself. I'm very happy and you should be very proud that history has repeated itself through Book Aid."

In 1945, the Soviet Union requested volumes of poetry, novels by writers such as Hemingway, Steinbeck and Priestley and classic texts by Shakespeare, Chaucer and Milton. Fiction remains in demand today, but modern tastes are broader. Requests have been made for works of philosophy, technical manuals, ecological books, religious books, and, unexpectedly, detective stories.

Children's books are also in short supply in Russia and the republics. The Rudomina library held a Christmas party for 520 children this month, at which each child was given a book provided by Book Aid. The library hopes that many more children will benefit from next week's national appeal.

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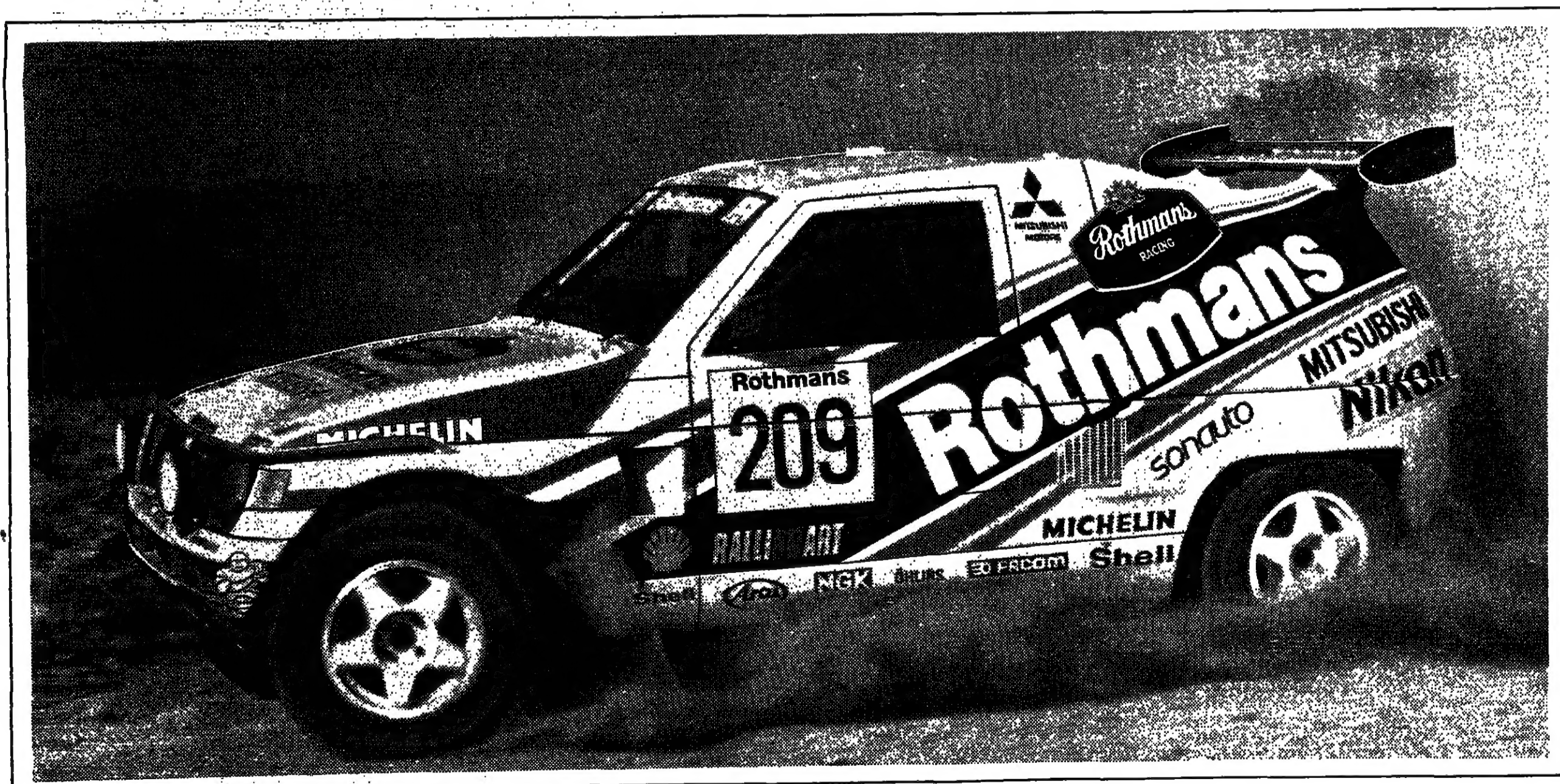
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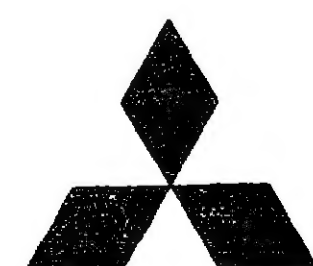
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مكتبة في الجزائر

Speedy microwaves can spoil the flavour

SCIENTISTS may have proved what gourmets have suspected for some time: while food cooked in microwaves might be on the dinner table faster it is generally less tasty than conventionally cooked food.

Studies by two chemists have found that the chemical reactions which give cooked food its flavours are not given enough time to flourish in microwaves.

Worse still, microwaving can create some chemicals which give foods "off" flavours such as burnt, pungent or fishy tastes — fine crème brûlée or kippers but bad

Beware the fishy flavour in your soufflé. Cooking with a microwave oven is all a question of taste, reports Nick Nuttall

news for a soufflé.

The findings have been made by Helen Yeo and Takayuki Shibamoto at the University of California who studied the effects of cooking bread, cakes, meat and vegetables in a microwave oven.

The researchers harnessed a system known as the Maillard reaction which predicts how the sugars and proteins found in food will combine during cooking. De-

pending on how these reactions occur desirable or undesirable flavour chemicals will be made.

The good ones, called thiazoles, cafurans and pyrazines, give foods a wide range of tasty flavours including meaty, caramel, buttery, roasted and nutty tastes.

The "off" chemicals are called thiophenes, pyrroles and oxazoles which give food less appetising fishy, burnt

and rubbery flavours and ones which resemble the taste of hay, boiled corn and vegetables.

The studies found that in each of the tests fewer of the "tasty" chemicals were created and in some cases some of the "off" ones were also made during microwaving.

In cakes, for example, the chemicals that give food nutty and caramel flavours were in short supply or absent.

Microwaved meat had only a third of the proper flavour chemicals than meat cooked to the same degree in an ordinary oven.

Tastings confirmed the findings. People eating the cakes, for example, claimed they tasted a bit like green vegetables which comes from the presence of oxazole compounds.

The researchers, whose findings are published in *Trends in Food Science and Technology*, believe that the temperatures are too low and the cooking times too short in microwaves for the right flavour chemicals to develop.

The findings have surprised few of Britain's leading chefs. Michel Roux of Le Gavroche in Mayfair, central London, said yesterday that he had never used a microwave at the restaurant.

"I have a microwave at home but use it only to warm baby milk. I can understand why odd flavours appear with microwaves because of the way they work," he said.

"In cakes say where there is a high sugar content, the sugar will burn before the cake cooks and you will get a bitter taste," said Mr Roux.

Gary Rhodes, of the Greenhouse Restaurant, also in Mayfair, who is trying to revive slow-cooking methods such as braising, stewing and pot-roasting, said: "Microwave cooking has to be taken for what it is. It is cooking for convenience and like all or most convenience foods it is not the way food should or could be." Only slow-cooking gave sugars, for example, the chance to caramelise, he said.

"Instant cooking, two, three or even ten minutes, gives you no chance at all of creating real flavour," Mr Rhodes added.

Food and drink, Weekend Times, pages 6, 7

After nine long years baby Madeline takes her bow

FROM ROBERT COCKBURN IN SYDNEY

IN A world first for Australian artificial birth pioneers, a delighted Sydney couple yesterday showed off their baby daughter conceived by a revolutionary micro-injection technique.

After nine unsuccessful years trying to have a family, Annabel Shortte conceived when sperm from her husband John was injected directly into the outer shell of her eggs using a fine needle. After three months in frozen storage, the fertilised eggs were replaced in her womb where one grew successfully into a healthy 8lb 7oz baby, Madeline.

"She's here. It's a miracle. It's wonderful," Mrs Shortte said. "I couldn't believe it, I really couldn't."

Mrs Shortte gave birth on Wednesday night after a 12-hour labour in Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital. Holding Madeline in her hospital bed yesterday, Mrs Shortte told reporters that she and her husband want another child by the new technique.

John Shortte said there were times when it was difficult to carry on with the treatment. The Shorttes' previous attempts to conceive included four years of in-vitro fertilization treatments. Artificial insemination by donor was tried 13 times. "We did go on and here is

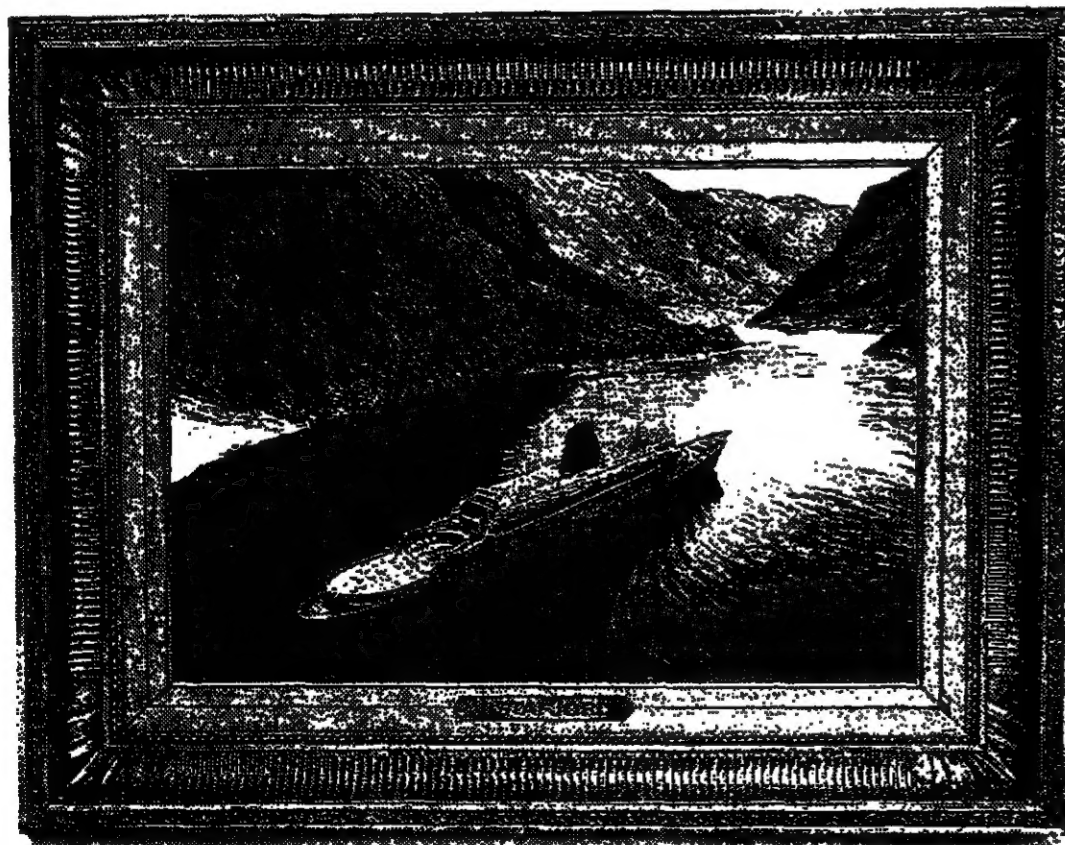


Pioneer trio: the Shorttes with Madeline yesterday

living proof that there is light at the end of the tunnel," Mr Shortte said.

Australia and Britain have been at the forefront of IVF research since the Seventies. Work is to continue in developing the micro-injection

technique. Doctor Ric Porter, of the Royal North Shore Hospital, said: "It shows how developed freezing techniques are and how robust that technique is. And in fact how strong the human embryo can be."



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CUNARD

WI gives up the struggle

After more than 60 years of jam and Jerusalem, the Women's Institute at Lyme Regis, Dorset, has disbanded because none of its members is willing to take on the responsibility of high office.

The national federation said yesterday that over the last decade, numbers had declined nationally by 90,000 to 310,000. One of the newest members at Lyme Regis, Mrs Bill Hargreaves, offered to be a member of the committee but would not undertake the onerous duties which come with a title.

Mrs Hargreaves is 91 and said that younger members of the 24-strong branch, average age about 70, would be better able to handle the strain.

News plea

Brussels: The International Federation of Journalists called on Israel to lift restrictions on Palestinian journalists and press censorship in Israel and the Israeli-occupied Arab territories. (AFP)

Dropping in

Paris: A 20-year-old man threw himself out of his 11th floor bedroom window after a row with his parents, then took the lift back up and rang the door to go in to wait for paramedics. (AFP)

Tourist record

Hong Kong: A record six million tourists visited Hong Kong in 1991 with arrivals from Taiwan, Japan and Southeast Asian countries heading the list. The total rose 1.7 per cent over 1990 to 6,032,061. (AFP)

Saving jaws

Washington: Federal regulators are considering putting dozens of shark species under protection because they are threatened by fishing.

Small claim

Besanton: A dwarf who calls himself "Mister Skyman" and makes his living being tossed in competitions plans to fight recent orders to halt the practice, claiming it deprived him of his job. (AP)

Model buses

Derby: Chesterfield Transport bus company bought by employees from Chesterfield Council in 1989, is being used as a case study for privatisation techniques at Moscow's Academy of National Economy.

Rockefeller hands on the torch

The Rockefeller family has passed on the torch of its multi-billion-dollar empire to the fourth generation, naming David Rockefeller Jr, aged 50, to head the family's affairs. "It certainly is a significant step in the history of the family," said David Rockefeller, aged 77, patriarch of the family for the past decade.

American director Spike Lee, who has previously forbidden South African cinemas to show his films, makes his first trip to the country next week to shoot part of a film, *Army Means Necessary*, about Malcolm X in the Johannesburg township of Soweto.

Jimmy Carter said in Atlanta that more of the world's less-developed nations are asking

for his help in resolving civil wars and ethnic disputes than he can handle. A meeting of 200 "eminent persons" at Carter's presidential library marks the first formal session of his "negotiating network".

Sir Peter Ustinov landed a new role yesterday when he



was appointed Chancellor of Durham University. Sir Peter, aged 70, was selected

from more than 60 nominations by the university's senate and council.

Former Washington mayor Marion Barry died a \$5.5 million lawsuit against federal prison officials who reported that a visitor engaged in a sex act with him in front of dozens of people. Barry, serving a six-month term for cocaine possession, has been transferred to a medium-security jail.

Journalists have awarded the 1991 European media prize to Irish President Mary Robinson. She will accept the award, from Pictet Van Wassenhove, husband of Princess Margriet of The Netherlands, at a ceremony in the Dutch royal palace on April 15.

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a colourful background to the fishermen mending their nets. Excitement mounts as visitors cheer the elegant ponies and traps at the local race-

course and, as the sun dips below the blue horizon, the Casino comes to life at the spin of a roulette wheel. What ever your game, come play it on Malta, where the warmest of welcomes is only three hours away by air.

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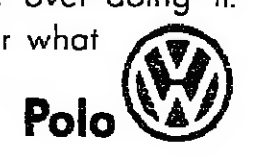


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Fighters rally to flag of ousted leader in Georgia

FROM BRUCE CLARK IN MOSCOW

GEORGIA's military council moved to block Zviad Gamsakhurdia's advance as he mustered his followers in the west of the country for a march on the capital.

The new regime's troops were seeking to confine the activity of the deposed president's men to as small an area as possible around his power base in Zugdidi, the heartland of the Mengrel clan to which Mr Gamsakhurdia belongs. The town, where he proclaimed "civil war" at a mass meeting on Thursday, provided many of the loyal troops who died defending him during the recent fighting in Tbilisi. It is believed to be seething with bitterness over its "martyrdom".

He returned there on Thursday and held a huge rally calling for an armed

march on Tbilisi. As forces loyal to the new Georgian regime massed in the town of Kutaisi, Gia Chanturia, a leading nationalist politician and leader of the National Democratic party, forecast in Moscow that "within a fortnight, the problem of Gamsakhurdia will not exist either in western Georgia or eastern Georgia".

He foresaw bloodshed, but not outright civil war as Mr Gamsakhurdia struggled to reassert control over the republic from which he was forced to flee on January 6, only to make a surprise return 10 days later.

Mr Chanturia, who was freed from jail during the recent fighting in Tbilisi, claimed that a wealthy Georgian émigré was providing money and guns to assist the ousted president's attempt to regain power. "Naturally, we are doing all we can to stop this process," he said.

Georgia's new rulers faced growing problems on two fronts yesterday as local leaders in the South Ossetian ethnic war zone confirmed plans to hold a referendum tomorrow on uniting their region with North Ossetia, which is part of Russia on the other side of the Caucasus.

Tbilisi's military council, which has extended an olive branch to the Ossetian minority and accused Mr Gamsakhurdia of practising "genocide" against it, denounced the plebiscite as an attempt to undermine the peace process it had started. Up to 500 people have been killed over the past year in fighting between Georgians and Ossetians. The fighting has helped to poison relations between Mr Gamsakhurdia's government and Russia.

The commander of Moscow's 500,000-strong army in Transcaucasia, General Valeri Patrikeyev, yesterday denounced the continual violent raids on military barracks that took place when Mr Gamsakhurdia was in power. At yesterday's officers' conference in Moscow, General Patrikeyev reiterated his wish that his command should come under the jurisdiction of President Yeltsin's Russian government.

Asked about the mounting speculation that Eduard Shevardnadze might take over the leadership of his native republic, Mr Chanturia said the former foreign minister was a "very serious politician" who could help resolve Georgian problems, though not necessarily in the role of president.

London: Britain has recognised the republics of Kirghizia and Tajikistan after their acceptance of the European Community guidelines on the recognition of new states in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union (David Watts writes). Georgia is the only remaining such state not to be recognised by Britain.

Soviet plea, page 4
Saturday Review, page 10
Yeltsin plea, page 1



Favourite despot stands by

BY BRUCE CLARK

ONLY days ago, the Tbilisi intelligentsia sat down to tables groaning with food and wine in an atmosphere of light-headed joy.

The return of calm to their beloved city, and above all the expulsion of a president accused of creating a climate of philistine repression, suspicion and paranoia, seemed too good to be true. As things turned out, the surprise was from the intelligentsia's point of view, too good to last. Whatever designs are being worked out over the heads of this ancient nation, they do not include anything so simple as a clean, quick victory for its cosmopolitan elite over populist authoritarianism.

As Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the deposed president, gathers forces and regional differences resurface, there is one respect in which the "good times" for which the intelligentsia yearns may come back. The return to Georgia of Eduard Shevardnadze, whose enlightened despotism as local party boss is recalled with fondness in the salons of Tbilisi, looks more likely than at any time since he was first elevated to the Soviet foreign ministry back in 1985.

Prospects for his return do not just hinge on his credentials as a peace-maker. Mr Shevardnadze has suggested that through his contacts he could restore prosperity.



Rock rejoicing a jubilant Joe Bossano greeting supporters yesterday after being re-elected chief minister of Gibraltar for a second term. He took almost three-quarters of the vote. The result will signal to Britain and Spain that there is little hope of progress on the dispute over sovereignty unless

Madrid is prepared to reconsider its stand (Dominique Searle writes). The issue could lead to confrontation early this year when Anglo-Spanish talks on Gibraltar are to be held. Spain is vetoing the European Community's external frontiers convention on the ground that Madrid does not agree with

the EC's recognition of Gibraltar's status in the Community, to which the colony gained admittance on Britain's accession. The convention is due to be signed by December to define the single market's boundaries. Mr Bossano has put two tasks at the top of his agenda. The first is to press Britain to amend

the 1969 Gibraltar constitution to make it both less colonial and more in accord with developments in the EC. His second task is to set up a co-operation council with the nearby Spanish port of Algeciras to encourage economic co-operation outside the political constraints of the Brussels agreement.

Serb hostility remains as UN peacekeepers deploy

BY ANNE MCELVOY IN KARLOVAC AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

UNITED Nations peacekeepers embarked on their first deployment in Croatia's south yesterday, moving into positions on either side of the front lines.

A convoy of white vehicles flying the UN flag left Zagreb to begin organising liaison between the federal army and independent Croatia in the hope of strengthening the present ceasefire to allow a full UN force to be deployed. Four officers also left Belgrade for the Serbian side of the line and two others are to be stationed in Bosnia.

The first group of three officers, accompanied by an

armed police guard, reached Karlovac, the industrial city on the Kupa river, 35 miles south of Zagreb, yesterday afternoon. Earlier they had held consultations with Colonel Imro Agovic, the head of the Croatian forces, who told them: "I hope you have a pleasant stay and that peace will be established soon."

But, in a bitter outburst against "treason at the top of the state and army", a senior Yugoslav army general has promised that his men will not leave Serb-controlled areas inside Croatia. General Andrija Biorovic said that, because politicians were

"playing all sorts of games to keep themselves in power, there is nothing left but to go on fighting until the victory over fascism... for this general there will be no withdrawal". Without "treason" at the top of the army and among the Serbian opposition, he said, "Serb territories would be secured and we would have dictated terms to the European Community".

One of three Britons among the UN peacekeepers is Lieutenant-Colonel Andrew Taylor, from Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. Yesterday he began work organising the transfer of UN communications equipment brought in from Italy to Belgrade. He is optimistic that the UN's experience and influence could bring peace to the region.

All the UN officers have been drafted in from existing deployments. Their senior liaison officer, Colonel John Wilson, an Australian, admitted that they had been brought together at short notice and apologised to his hosts for his inability to get his tongue round the names of the 11 areas where his troops are to be stationed.

President Cossiga of Italy, which yesterday became the second country after Germany to establish diplomatic relations with Croatia, has arrived in Zagreb, the first head of state to visit the republic since it gained EC recognition on Wednesday. In Zagreb today the parliament will pass a law annulling Cardinal Alojzije Stepinac's 1946 trial and conviction for Nazi collaboration. Under the communists the then archbishop of Zagreb was sentenced to 16 years' hard labour and loss of civic rights.

Diary, page 10

Sniper kills British journalist in Osijek

BY ANNE MCELVOY

A BRITISH photographer was shot dead yesterday in the eastern Croatian town of Osijek.

Paul Jenks, aged 26, who was working for EPA, the Frankfurt-based European press photo agency, was hit in the head by a sniper's bullet on the front line. He reached hospital but died on the operating table in the afternoon. Osijek's crisis centre said. He was the 22nd journalist to be killed covering the conflict in Yugoslavia.

Jenks had entered the trenches on the southern flank of Osijek with Hassan Amini, a freelance British photographer. They had been working in the town for several weeks. The Croatian guards who accompanied them reported that Jenks had been hit by a single bullet fired from the enemy trenches



Jenks: died on the operating table

in the Serb-held village of Anunovac, as he stood up to take a photograph. They added that he was shot on the town's southern line of defence in the suburb of Brijuni. Mr Amini is unhurt. European Community observers have also come under fire.

Hitler conquers the best-seller lists across East Europe

FROM ROGER BOYES IN WARSAW

HITLER'S *Mein Kampf*, freshly translated into Slav languages, is a best seller in bookshops and on street markets from Warsaw to Sofia. Thousands of glossy paperback versions of Hitler's master-plan are being sold, mainly to young people, in Eastern Europe.

In Poland the book has overtaken popular fiction as the most sought-after paperback. Three days ago the price was about £2, but by yesterday the price had doubled. Even then, a trader in the underpass near Warsaw central station had almost to fight off customers.

Demand for the book may be influenced by growing nationalism in Eastern Europe. Although serious nationalist politicians try to steer of fascism, young skinhead groups are not so fussy. Skinheads in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary favour Nazi insignia and tattoo swastikas on their arms.

Most purchasers are simply curious about a book that was top of the communist censorship lists. One customer in Warsaw said: "I am going to read it, but I do not think it will make me a Nazi." He bought 28 copies claiming it would soon be banned and its black-market value would rise. A dealer told the Warsaw newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, that he had sold 150 copies in two hours. "I am not ashamed of selling Hitler," he said. "It is business for me."

There may, however, be something more sinister involved. It is strange that the Polish and Bulgarian translations (both from English rather than German) have appeared simultaneously.



Hitler: his words cast spell on new generation

That suggests a degree of co-ordination, and perhaps foreign involvement. The Polish police cannot track down the publisher. Werset, the company whose name is on the cover, seems not to exist. The translators cited inside the book used pen names.

The introduction was written anonymously. The printers carried out the order without checking the identity of the publisher. In Sofia, as in Warsaw, the publishers risk prosecution, so some bookshops are refusing to touch the book. In those cases, *Mein Kampf* is sold from picnic tables set up outside the shop.

The initial Polish print run was 20,000. They reached the bookshops on January 9 and within a day most had been sold. But more are appearing, unloaded at night and on sale on the street the next morning. In Warsaw, a city wrecked by Hitler, the sale of the book leaves a bitter taste. "Hitler is suddenly everywhere," said a middle-aged woman, "and I thought we had got rid of him."

Austria arrests neo-Nazi group

Vienna: Austrian police said yesterday they had broken up an armed neo-Nazi paramilitary group which was aiming to overthrow the government (Brenda Fowler writes).

Three men, including the group's suspected leader, Hermann Ussner, aged 49, have been arrested on suspicion of violating Austria's laws against Nazi activities. Günther Bögl, president of the Austrian state police, told a press conference. Police had identified 21 members of the group, called Defence Sport Club Trenck, in the past two weeks, after a man was beaten up by skinheads.

Herr Bögl said that no concrete plans had been worked out against the government, but documents seized in searches of group members' houses showed they had connections with American and Canadian groups and had participated in paramilitary training, planning to overthrow the government. The confiscated weapons are said to include sub-machineguns and pipe bombs.

Election call

Athens: Andreas Papanastasiou, the former Socialist prime minister, demanded immediate elections after a court cleared him in a corruption trial. He said the conservative government had won power by deceiving Greek voters. (Reuters)

Treaty scrapped

Helsinki: Finland and Russia are to scrap a 1948 treaty binding the Finns to protect the Soviet Union from attack, and to sign a non-aggression pact. Commentators had seen the treaty as a restriction on Finnish sovereignty and neutrality. (Reuters)

Last post

Frankfurt: The US Army's 3rd Armoured Division was deactivated at its barracks here, ending 50 years' service. The division was raised in Louisiana in 1941 and took part in the Normandy landings in 1944, and the Gulf war last year. (AP)

Breast test

Guelph, Ontario: A woman who strolled bare-breasted to prove women should have the same topless rights as men was fined £37. The judge said anyone who thought male and female breasts were the same was not living in the real world. (Reuters)

Forest help

Tokyo: Japan and the European Community have agreed to co-operate in preserving tropical forests and rebuilding nuclear power plants in Eastern Europe. Laurens Jan Brinkhorst, the EC's director-general for the environment, said. (Reuters)

Synod called

Rome: The pope called a synod of Roman Catholic bishops for the autumn of 1994. The Vatican said the pontiff had chosen as its theme "religious life and its mission in the church and in the world". (Reuters)

Bogus bubbles bring a rum affair in Cuba to court

FROM PHILIP JACOBSON IN PARIS

A BOTTLE of vintage champagne bearing the noble label of Moët et Chandon stands as exhibit 1 in a Paris court where the "Cuban Connection" case is now unfolding.

Is it the real thing, or one of 50,000 or more impostors allegedly slipped on to the world market by an enterprising Frenchman who turned cheap white wine into finest bubbly in a factory in Havana?

According to the prosecution, Jean-Claude Remaury was guilty of a bare-faced swindle that netted him millions of francs at the expense of Moët et Chandon's profits and good name. With M Remaury in the dock, accused of complicity in the affair, is Charley Delmare, fine wine expert and proprietor of the celebrated Maison du Champagne in one of the more select quarters of Paris.

They are alleged to have secured the approval of the Castro regime to set up what amounted to a "parallel" production line, using the most modern equipment to transform a modest blanc de blanc from Anjou into a superficially convincing copy of the Brut

Imperial that sells for about 250 francs (£25) a bottle in the West.

According to yesterday's *Le Figaro*, particular care was taken with forging the labels that went on bottles imported from France-copying Moët et Chandon's technique minutely, they carried a laser-printed reference number, invisible to the naked eye but useful as a mark of "authenticity" in dealing with knowledgeable buyers.

M Remaury is said to have decided to try his hand in Cuba after abandoning a budding career in politics that took him into well placed socialist circles. The deal with Fidel Castro's officials seemed straightforward enough: M Remaury was left alone as long as he stayed out of politics and passed on a share in the profits to the state-owned rum factory where the phoney stuff was to be bottled.

At some stage, a son-in-law of General Manuel Noriega, the deposed dictator of Panama, was enlisted to establish a front company there and later an export office was opened in Geneva. French

customs investigators suspect that many more than 50,000 bottles of the phoney champagne may have been sold before a German customer, puzzled by finding none of Brut Imperial's distinctive qualities in a sample glass, referred his consignment to the local fraud squad.

After an investigation that began in 1989, about 20,000 bottles were seized in Germany and as many again in The Netherlands; the French end of the enquiry was completed when M Remaury changed planes at Roissy-Charles de Gaulle airport. Charged with a variety of offences, he and M Delmare have denied them all and insisted in court that the Cuban operation was intended simply to produce a fizzy blend of white wine and fruit juice.

For its part, Moët et Chandon takes the affair with great seriousness, even if every last fake bottle is now off the market. As Gucci, Chanel, Louis Vuitton and many another great name in the luxury trade has discovered to its cost, counterfeiters are getting better and bolder.

Scandals rock Paris parties

BY PHILIP JACOBSON

THE first of the 1992 crop of French political scandals is upon us, and, as usual, dirty money is at the heart of things. Sparked by a judicial raid on the headquarters of the ruling Socialist party this week by order of an investigating magistrate looking into campaign financing, it has blossomed swiftly into the familiar exchange of accusations and insults across the main party divides.

On all past form, a counter-offensive was to be expected after the raid on the Socialist's HQ. The seasoned political observer would see it in the subsequent swoop by tax authorities on the offices of a publishing company run by the main conservative faction, the RPR party.

Even to a nation notably cynical about the integrity of its elected representatives, this latest round in a long-running saga of affairs involving dummy companies, non-existent consultants, and phoney invoices serves to underline once again the corrupting influence of hard cash in French politics.

French villages slide into the red in run-up to the Winter Games

Tiny communities in the Savoy Alps are counting the cost of playing host to Olympic sportsmen. Philip Jacobson reports

In three weeks time, the tiny commune of Brides-les-Bains in the French Alps will become famous around the world as the 1992 Winter Olympics gets under way. Some 2,000 athletes will be based here in a spanking new games village on snow-covered slopes above what was once a spa for the sedate and overweight.

Like most neighbouring communes, Brides-les-Bains - which had been finding the spa trade increasingly unrewarding - had lobbied furiously for a share in the greatest event ever staged in the region. Landing one of the Olympic plums was considered a triumph, and there was a proud new slogan: "Brides-les-Bains, 600 inhabitants, 600 metres of altitude, 600 million francs (£62 million) to invest in the games".

But as the great day approaches, all the talk is of a looming financial disaster for the entire commune. Five years after embarking on its Olympic spending spree, Brides-les-Bains faces bankruptcy, with a budget deficit of approxi-

mately 100,000 francs per inhabitant. "Come to see our monument to folly!" asked an elderly man outside the *boulangerie*, gesturing at the new casino-cum-town hall, all steel and reflecting glass. "Worth a gold medal on its own, eh?"

For one of the lunch-time drinkers in La Parisienne, it was all the fault of the mayor, Jean-François Chedal. "Outside he kept pressuring him to build this and renew that, it was only when they did the final accounts that the mayor discovered we were in the shit." One French magazine had described the projects undertaken at Brides-les-Bains as "quasi-pharaoniques", he added, almost proudly, but at least the bailiffs could not tear up the fine new pavements laid specially for the games. Half an hour's drive fur-

ther up the winding mountain road, another little commune, Pralognan-la-Vanoise, population 650, is counting the cost of Olympic fever. Eager to host some big crowd-puller like skating or ice hockey, the *maire* dug deep to find the cash for a superb 30-million-franc ice-rink. Alas, Pralognan was allocated cutting, which is not an Olympic event at all.

The recent discovery that Pralognan's Olympic outlay had consumed well over twice its total annual revenue led to a voters' revolt that overthrew the mayor. But even after some desperate refinancing, the bankers are closing in.

With problems like this, the last thing the worst affected Savoyard communes needed was their fourth bad season on the trot. Although the French Alps now have snow in abun-

dance - enough to block the region's brand-new motorway for almost 48 hours after the first blizzards arrived - bookings for next month are sharply down on previous years. The prospect of facing Olympic prices and Olympic crowds evidently does not appeal.

Down in Albertville, the host city, the Olympic organising committee points out that the overall budget for the games is already more or less balanced, that most of the 13 sites staging events are managing to cope financially. And long after the closing ceremony, they argue, the whole of Savoy will continue to benefit from the massive spending on infrastructure. Besides new roads snaking up into the mountains, the high-speed TGV rail network has been extended and telecommunications greatly improved.

Sceptics remain unconvinced. Bills are still arriving in Grenoble, the last French city to host the winter games, for the extravaganzas there almost a quarter of a century ago.

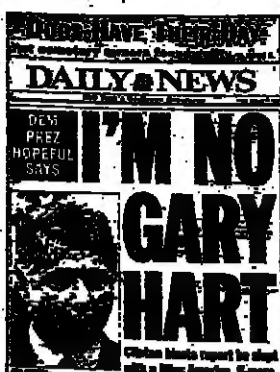
Wild Bill ambushed by sex pack on campaign trail

AMERICA'S presidential campaign trail yesterday reached the latest of its now familiar seedy sidetracks. Would this week's freshly published stories of the extramarital affairs of "Wild Bill" Clinton, the favourite for the Democratic nomination, change the direction of events or would they, after providing a few days' entertainment, sink back into the disputed obscurity from which they came?

In Washington and New Hampshire, where Governor Clinton is campaigning this weekend, Democrat and Republican strategists carefully studied the latest reports, originating in *Star*, a supermarket magazine, but taken over by several other papers yesterday, that he had allegedly had affairs with at least six women — Elizabeth Ward, a former Miss America, a local beauty queen in Arkansas, a singer, a journalist and two political aides. The reports, based on an Arkansas libel action, claim that Mr Clinton used public funds to entertain his women.

The charges are not new and come from a source known to be hostile to Mr

Clinton. But their publication at this critical stage of the campaign could, it was speculated, destroy the leading Democrat for 1992 as decisively as a similar set of incidents in 1988 ended the ambitions of Gary Hart.



Making a splash: a front page yesterday

American press has not been able to substantiate the charges and has held back

from republishing the allegations. The *New York Post*, however, headlined the romps of "Wild Bill". Its rival, the *New York Daily News*, said he had been "star-struck" by the tabloid which put him "in [the] beds of beauty queens".

Thus, just in a political campaign itself, does momentum build which will either be maintained or stopped in the days and weeks ahead. Observers here yesterday recalled the strongly circulating rumour in 1988 about George Bush's alleged adultery which, despite several cautious press attempts, and a day on which it knocked 20 points off the stock market, never took off. "The answer to the big 'A' question is 'No,'" said his son.

Governor Clinton immediately described this week's articles as trash. His current accuser, Larry Nichols, is described as a former aide whose sacking was caused by his habit of making ex-

cessive phone calls to Nicaraguan Contras. Clinton supporters hope that, unlike Gary Hart, who taunted the press to prove his reputation for womanising and then gave them all the proof they needed by visiting the yacht Monkey Business in the company of Donna Rice, Mr Clinton's tactics would provide better defence.

Since he became the leader of the so-called Democratic "six-pack" of challengers, the Arkansas governor has been the subject of several psychological profiles in the American media. It is suggested that Governor Clinton's troubled childhood, spent peacemaking between his mother and alcoholic stepfather, is the key to his character, explaining both his early development of conciliatory political skills and his personal insecurity.

The candidate himself has not hidden the difficulties which he has experienced in his own marriage to Hillary Rodham, the formidable



Linked names: Elizabeth Ward, left, a former Miss America, who according to *Star*, a magazine sold in supermarkets, was a mistress of Bill Clinton, right

feminist lawyer. After the rumours of affairs last surfaced in September, the couple admitted that their relationship had not been perfect. The Clinton campaign hoped then that their candidate's virtual acceptance of past failings, and his wife's vigorous support of their currently successful marriage, would stem the invading tide.

Since the destruction of Mr Hart, the American me-



dia has been given a number of lessons that may also affect the course of Mr Clinton's political journey. In his much discussed recent book, *Feeding Frenzy*, Larry Sabato set out his thesis of how the trend towards "pack journalism", in which hundreds of journalists daily hunt the same prey, has corrupted campaign coverage.

The *Washington Post* has just completed a big series on Dan Quayle, for example,

"mental health" charges against Michael Dukakis, in which baseless allegations by an extremist sect eventually became familiar enough from newspaper coverage to be used by Ronald Reagan himself. Although "attack journalism" is almost as old as American politics itself, some of the criticism has stuck. The reaction to the Kennedy rape trial and the Judge Clarence Thomas affair has produced much hand-wringing.

Central to Mr Clinton's future now will be the reaction of *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and the main television networks. If any of the more sordid allegations, especially the one which alleges an abortion by a mistress on his personal staff, are proven to be true, he will have a hard time in a national campaign.

Reporters, however, have for a long time been looking for believable witnesses. So far the field contains only one woman, Connie Hamzy, who has described a 1984 encounter with the governor in *Penthouse* magazine. Ms Hamzy's other claims include sleeping with "24 men in one night".

Bush relies on recovery package

Tax cuts planned to outflank Democrats

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Bush will unveil shortly what the White House is promoting as a "dramatic" economic recovery plan designed to wrest the initiative from the Democrats and restore his political fortunes.

The plan, to be announced in Mr Bush's State of the Union speech on January 28 and in next day's federal budget, will include new tax breaks for the middle classes, measures to revive the property market and lessen exorbitant health insurance costs, and still deeper cuts in Pentagon spending. His aides are banking on the package to boost consumer confidence, dispel the notion that the millionaire president does not understand middle America's economic distress, and reverse the freefall in his approval ratings. Mr Bush has been under pressure to bring the announcement forward.

A *Washington Post* poll yesterday showed the presi-

dent's popularity had fallen to yet another new low point of just 45 per cent; 78 per cent said that America was "seriously off on the wrong track" with only 19 per cent taking the opposite view.

The recovery plan has been hotly debated in the administration. Conservatives like Jack Kemp, the housing secretary, and Vice-President Dan Quayle argued for radical tax-cutting to stimulate growth. Moderates led by Richard Darman, the White House budget director, and Nicholas Brady, the treasury secretary, favoured more restrained measures that would not undermine money-market confidence or be dead on arrival at Capitol Hill.

The moderates appear to have prevailed. One conservative administration official was yesterday quoted as calling the package "anaemic". But the White House evidently intends to sell it hard. Marlin Fitzwater, the presi-

dent's spokesman, said this week that it would be "dramatic" and "really significant". It is expected to give families tax cuts worth up to \$17 billion (\$9.7 billion) overall next year by raising income tax exemptions by either \$500 a person or \$1000 a child. This would give an extra dollar or two per day to most families, but there could be a disproportionate psychological lift and the Democrats could less easily steal the Republicans' tax-cutting clothes.

The administration has reportedly decided to cut an additional \$30 to \$50 billion more from the already shrinking defence budget over the next five years, and Democrats will fight for even deeper cuts. George Mitchell, the Senate majority leader, on Thursday proposed cuts of \$100 billion. Initial savings are likely to be made in procurement but manpower will probably suffer, so revising the Pentagon's present plans to cut manpower by 25 per cent to 1.6 million by 1995.

It is not clear whether Mr Bush will use the 1993 extra defence savings to finance tax cuts or reduce the budget deficit. The former would involve reopening the tortuous 1990 budget agreement with restraints on federal spending. First-time homebuyers are expected to get tax breaks of up to \$5,000 over two years.

The poor will get tax credits and the middle class tax exemptions to lessen the cost of health insurance. Mr Bush will revive his call for a capital gains tax cut.

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Islamic leaders urge calm

FROM REUTERS
IN ALGERIA

MUSLIM fundamentalist leaders in a mosque condemned off by security forces, told militants at Friday prayers that Algeria's new rulers had started a crackdown and arrested 500 people.

They appealed for calm and told them to avoid provoking the authorities into moving against them. There has been no official confirmation of the arrests.

Scores of fundamentalists were turned back on the outskirts of the working-class Sunna Mosque area, a bastion of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which made large gains in the first round of a general election which was scrapped last weekend.

Abdelkader Hachani and Abdelkader Moghni, leaders of the Islamic front, urged the few hundred people able to reach the mosque to remain vigilant and avoid all provocation against the new Algerian leadership sworn in on Thursday. "This regime is going to fail," Mr Hachani said in a 30-minute address.

Kamal Agoum, vice-president of the Sunna mosque association, told journalists there had been at least 500 arrests yesterday. Witnesses earlier saw at least five Islamic front militants detained.

Just 24 hours earlier, the head of the five-man high council of state now running the country warned people not to use Islam for self-interest. Muhammad Boudiaf, who returned from 27 years' political exile to take power, said: "The institutions of the state must be respected by all and the state must be one of law."

Soldiers backed by tanks sent in by Sid Ahmed Ghozali, the prime minister, have been guarding key government buildings since President Chadli Benjedid resigned last Saturday.

Shamir is ready for early polls

FROM RICHARD BEESTON
IN JERUSALEM

YITZHAK Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, yesterday conceded that early elections now seem inevitable. He also hinted that he would lead his ruling Likud party's campaign for re-election on a platform of peace and security for the Jewish state.

Mr Shamir's right-wing coalition government is expected to lose its majority in the Knesset tomorrow when two junior partners say they will resign in protest at the course of the current Middle East peace process. "There are several options, but it is almost certain that we will have to go to early elections," Mr Shamir said. "In any event, my will is to continue the peace process."

He gave an even stronger hint that electioneering could begin at any moment when he appeared to distance himself from Tehiya and Mofedet, the two extremist parties, and sought to cast himself in the unfamiliar role of peacemaker. "Our government, the Likud government, is completely true to its principles and to the constant effort to achieve peace," he said, defending his policy of granting limited autonomy to Palestinians in the occupied territories. "Therefore, we were not able to show any flexibility towards these groups that decided to leave the government," he added.

Shimon Peres, the opposition Labour party leader, yesterday welcomed the prospect of early elections. Labour's chief election obstacle is that it broadly supports Likud's peace efforts. It is expected to target its campaigning efforts on Mr Shamir's economic record, at a time of record unemployment, high inflation and the government's apparent failure to absorb hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jewish immigrants.



Kiss of peace: a guerrilla of El Salvador's Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front kissing her baby during celebrations marking the signing of peace accords between the government and guerrillas. Tens of thousands gathered in the capital, San Salvador, after President Cristiani and guerrilla chiefs signed the pact on Thursday ending 12 years of civil war. The

conflict killed more than 75,000 people, wounded twice that number and laid waste much of the nation's infrastructure. Government and guerrilla supporters held separate parties, however. Arena, the government party, was blamed by human rights groups for military-linked death squads which killed 20,000 suspected left-wingers in the early 1980s. (AP)

NEW YORK NOTEBOOK by Charles Bremner

Hell's nannies bring chills and thrills

Thanks to a horror film and a New York murder case, a new villain has lurched into the minds of American parents this month: the nanny from hell. With 8.5 million American families now entrusting their offspring to day-time minders, Hollywood has found a new vein of yuppie fiction with *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle*, a tale about an adorable nanny who weasels her way into a Seattle family and sets about its destruction.

This Fatal Attraction for the 1990s, starring Rebecca De Mornay, has just knocked *Hook*, the Peter Pan story remade by Spielberg, from its perch as the top current film. With its portrait of the quintessential 30-something family torn apart by a psychotic Mary Poppins figure, the film has sparked anguish among young middle class parents from Los Angeles to Manhattan, rather as this month's conviction of a nanny has in Britain. Parental fear has now been further sharpened by the prosecution in New York of a sweet au pair girl on the



Scare tactics: horror film gripping the US

charge that she set fire to the three-month-old girl in her care, killing her and burning down the house. Olivia Riner, who is aged 20 from the Swiss town of Wettigen, was indicted this week on four counts of murder and arson in the home of William and Denise Fischer in White Plains, a prosperous suburb. According to the Fischers, Ms Riner was the ideal, loving nanny until the moment the

boyfriend of their older daughter arrived at their house, found it on fire and broke down the locked door to the baby's room. The police said Ms Riner used flammable liquids to start fires in three bedrooms. So far, no one has come up with a motive for Ms Riner's alleged act and the police have backed down from an earlier claim that they had direct evidence against her.

Ms Riner, who is pleading not guilty and is on bail in the custody of her parents in New York, has become the subject of a sympathetic press campaign in Switzerland. She says she had just finished putting cat food in a dish in the laundry room and was walking towards her bedroom when the cat leaped from her bedroom hissing. Miss Riner said her bed was in flames and her bedroom window was open. The police said she called the fire brigade and tried to extinguish the flames.

The nanny panic has elicited hundreds of lesser horror tales in television shows and newspapers across the

country. Common themes are "child-care providers" who leave babies alone in cribs, entertain boyfriends and empty bank accounts. "Short of video-taping the entire time the person is with your child, you never know what is going on," said Debra Kent, an Indiana mother. Under pressure from parents whose children have been abused by babysitters, the California legislature has set up a data bank, called Trustline, which lists all reputable child-minders in the state.

When the people of Manchester looked for a nickname to encapsulate the violence of the Moss Side, they should have spared a thought for the sensitive feelings of 1.3 million New Yorkers. The civic fathers of the borough of the Bronx are hurt that their name has been adopted yet again by some foreign town with a local murder problem.

A business group called Positively Bronx has written to complain to George Chadwick, the lord mayor of Manchester, about the "outrage" felt by the bor-

ough residents on hearing that Moss Side had been dubbed the "Bronx of Britain". "Those headlines hurt," they said. The *New York Post* pointed out that the comparison was hardly valid since Moss Side had suffered three killings in the past year. The toll in the Bronx is more than a murder a day.

Ignorance is said to be the curse of modern American children, but they could hardly be blamed if their own history books tell them that Napoleon won the battle of Waterloo and that America ended the Korean war by dropping the atomic bomb on the North. These assertions were found in new textbooks to be distributed in Texas schools.

The board of education there has taken the unprecedented step of fining five publishers \$240,000 (£137,000) and demanding immediate corrections after an investigation revealed 3,700 errors in their books, which are also destined for high schools across the whole of the United States.

Puppy love causes Cambodia hitch

FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN PHNOM PENH

THE programme to send 350,000 refugees back to Cambodia was facing a new dilemma yesterday because of the way man feels about his best friend.

Most Cambodian refugees seem not too alarmed at the prospect of landmines, bandits, malaria and lack of potable water when they begin returning in April, in a big operation supervised by the United Nations, now that peace of a sort has been restored to Cambodia. But many of the refugees in camps along the Thai-Cambodian border do not want to abandon their pet dogs: possibly 20,000 of the animals. Each family has been told it will be allowed to take only four chickens.

UN posters illustrating the Cambodians' return to their country after 13 years of war show refugees boarding buses with only moveable goods. But there is no sign of pet dogs — mostly mongrels, with names like Pick (Diamond), Ngun (Blackie) and Nissan (after the Japanese car).

"It was an oversight," said one UN official. "We thought they would leave their dogs behind. We were wrong." Unlike some Asians, Cambodians do not eat dog meat. They see canines as pets, and everywhere one looks in refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border there are dogs and puppies asleep in baskets or playing with children. One Cambodian said: "They are like members of the family."

The matter is of such moment that Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, who is in Cambodia to inspect repatriation preparations, took it up with officials of the Phnom Penh regime, who apparently were sympathetic.

ANC men 'paid for killing of defector'

Johannesburg: An Afrikaans newspaper has claimed that two intelligence officers of the African National Congress paid an Afrikaner extremist £2,000 to murder a former ANC comrade who had defected to the security police (Gavin Bell writes).

The newspaper, *Vry Weekblad*, said yesterday that it had initially facilitated a meeting between the ANC officers and Danie Odendaal, a disaffected member of the Afrikaner resistance movement, to allow Mr Odendaal to divulge details of clandestine arms supplies to right-wing groups. Mr Odendaal told *Vry Weekblad*, however, that his ANC contacts had changed his brief: they wanted him to murder Glory Sidebe, a former ANC member, who had become a police informer. The plot failed.

Ready for trial

Paris: Moussa Koussa, Libya's deputy foreign minister, and a less senior official, Abdullah Senoussi, wanted in connection with the bombing of a French airliner in 1989 which caused 170 deaths, are ready to stand trial in France, a radio report here said. (AP)

Delhi welcome

Delhi: Indian ministers have told Douglas Hurd, the foreign secretary, that their government wants to encourage British investment in India and welcomes next month's visit by businessmen from the Confederation of British Industry. (Reuters)

Activists freed

Havana: Cuba has released two of three human rights activists arrested after a television report linked them to three Miami-based Cuban exiles who were sentenced recently after being found with arms and explosives. (AFP)

Aids award

Melbourne: Victoria's supreme court approved a total payment of £1.5 million to 15 children who caught Aids through infected blood transfusions. The state's compensation for 100 Aids sufferers similarly infected totals £9.8 million. (Reuters)

Outback hunt

Sydney: Forty Asians, possibly Chinese, found wandering in the Australian outback after being shipwrecked on the northwest coast will be charged as illegal immigrants. Searches were continuing for 16 still lost in the region. (Reuters)

American held

Manila: Gunmen have kidnapped Michael Barnes, an American businessman, in Manila and have demanded \$20 million (£11.4 million) for his release. Nobody has claimed responsibility, but right-wing army dissidents are suspected. (Reuters)

Kiss and tell

Singapore: Aids virus carriers in Singapore will face up to two years in jail if they have sex without telling partners of their condition. A new bill in parliament also prescribes similar penalties for people who give blood knowing they carry the virus. (Reuters)

Clifford Longley

The Decade of Evangelism was never going to work

Has there been a big mistake in strategy in the churches of Britain in the 1990s? Have they put too much stress on the possibilities of converting the unconvinced, too much hope into the prospects of church unity? Would they have done better, before reaching outside, to have put their own houses in order first? The next few months may show a growing feeling among church members that the word whose time has come should not be "evangelism" nor "ecumenism" but "renewal" — that deepening the pool of faith should come before widening it.

The churches' Decade of Evangelism is a year old. The 1992 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity starts tomorrow. But it is clear now that neither of these endeavours is going to set the world alight. The Decade has so far achieved little but irritating the Jewish and Muslim communities. The Week will be not much more than a reminder of lost hopes. Yet depressing though these disappointments ought to be, none of the churches will spend next week in mourning. This is because neither the Decade of Evangelism (known to Roman Catholics as the "Decade of Evangelisation") nor the Week of Prayer for Unity has penetrated very far into the collective consciousness of church-goers — or even the consciousness of their pastors. Evangelism, unless it means rallies of the Billy Graham kind, is hardly understood as a concept. The thought of knocking on house doors looking for converts has little appeal. As for ecumenism, it has reached a stage at which it is normal for Christians of different denominations to be polite and warm to each other, but the stage beyond that is as unclear as ever.

At this is attributable to muddled leadership and uncertainties of purpose in every church, and an extreme evangelistic or ecumenical optimism that is near to dishonesty. The purpose of the Decade of Evangelism should have been defined before it began. Instead the idea was seized on with a kind of ecumenical "me-tooism" when the Pope mooted some such thing in the mid 1980s. What he meant is still not clear, but it may have had something to do with offering Polish Catholicism to Europe as a role model. When the Lambeth Conference took on the idea for the Anglican Communion in 1988, the motive was different — a patronising attempt to make Anglican Evangelicals feel they mattered, for instance — but not much more realistic.

As a result the Decade is wholly unfocused. To describe it as all things to all men is the polite way of saying it means nothing to anybody. But because it has become ecumenical property, nobody can say so. So the churches have agreed to play "Let's pretend we are all doing something to convert the nation", just as next week they will play "Let's pretend we all want to be united". It is not that nobody believes in converting the nation or being united. In church terms, these are platitudes equivalent to motherhood. But they have no agreed meaning.

Leaving aside sophisticated theologies of evangelism and ecumenism understood only by the elite few, ecumenism still to most Anglicans means persuading people in the other churches to become Anglicans, and to most Roman Catholics persuading people in other churches to become Catholics. This hardly makes for unity. Equally, evangelism to Anglicans means persuading those not in any church to become Anglicans, and so on. The Free Churches are not so different. So the churches are still essentially working with the pre-20th-century competitive model of inter-church relations, though they are not allowed to face the consequences.

Renewal — deepening before widening — has two great merits as an alternative strategy: it can be done honestly, and the aim can be seen in sharp focus. Individually, renewal means nothing other than the imitation of Christ, the pursuit of personal holiness through repentance, prayer and grace. Collectively, renewal means creating and nourishing a Christ-centred community of worship and service. Neither of these models of renewal requires any glance over shoulders to check on how good or popular is the "image" being projected. Each means concentrating on raw religion rather than on the politics of religion. That is what people want.

By analogy with business, this change of strategy equals getting the product right before giving thought to its marketing. If the product were good enough, marketing and merging — the commercial equivalents to evangelism and ecumenism — might well take care of themselves.

Tabloid readers have lapped up a story studiously ignored by the broadsheets, writes Alan Hamilton

Story of two nations



Making a splash: the Daily Mail's front page on Thursday

The best, naturally, came from the lurid *Daily Sport*: "Fergie's Texan playboy pal is the son of a drug-crazed killer, it was revealed last night." Strange how revelations are always made at night, never at lunchtime. Lunchtime is reserved for inventing them.

Whitaker and Harry Arnold, by far the best in this unreal business, could get their hands on the offending pictures. The best any paper could manage was pictures of Mr Wyatt with several entirely different women, and of the furniture in a flat he once rented in Mayfair.

Royal-watching is no new game, and might even be regarded as fair game. The liaisons of Edward VII when Prince of Wales were much hinted at in the scandal sheets, although they seem to have maintained a conspiracy of silence over his particular peccadillo, which was chasing fire engines. He would have been the captain of the London brigade, telegraph him when they had a big fire, and would sneak, incognito, to the

scene to assist with the hoses. The tone of tabloid royal-watching is different today, with its cheap moralising and two-faced attitude of warning the Queen's family that the public will stand for nothing other than impeccable behaviour from them. The Victorians were far more adept at the art of handling blatant hypocrisy.

The affair of the Duchess and her holiday snaps is important because it is of towering triviality. Her husband may be fourth in line of succession, but his chances of ever being called to duty are exceedingly remote. Even if he were, it is worth remembering that the wayward Edward VII was a much-loved and admired monarch in his brief reign.

By yesterday the brief little firework was beginning to fizzle out to make way for "Bush Rival in Sex Storm". Same script, different players.

A 20th-century Waterloo?

Michael Howard wonders if the Gulf war will be seen as a great victory or a military footnote

But what good came of it at last? asked Robert Southey's Little Peterkin after the Battle of Blenheim. Old Kaspar, understandably, could not tell him: it is seldom possible to say what good came out of any war. The success, and indeed the justice, of a war, is to be gauged not so much by the good it has achieved as by the evil it has averted. So it is with the war in the Gulf. Mercifully few soldiers were killed or maimed but every one of them is a private tragedy, especially those killed by "friendly fire". So is each of the scores of thousands, uncounted and probably uncountable, of the Iraqis we slaughtered.

The economy of Kuwait, which we fought to protect, is in ruins, and we have restored one of the most corrupt and undemocratic regimes in the Middle East. As for Iraq, our bombs wrecked an economic infrastructure which had taken fifty years to create. Thousands of Kurds have been driven into miserable exile, and Saddam Hussein seems more securely settled in power than ever. Did our servicemen and women risk or give their lives simply to achieve this?

Alas, all wars end in mess and disillusion. A battle lost, remarked Wellington after Waterloo, is only a shade more tragic than a battle won. The second world war, as near a just and necessary war as modern history can record, ended in the physical devastation of Europe, the exhaustion of Britain, and the surrender of Eastern Europe to a totalitarian oppression only marginally preferable to the regime from which it had been freed. But that would have become of us if that war had not been fought?

We must recall the situation that precipitated the Gulf war. Saddam had been able to build up a potential military hegemony in the Middle East largely through the neglect, if not the active cooperation of the Western powers, in particular the

United States, which was obsessed with the threat posed by the Ayatollah's Iran. Saddam had reasonable economic grievances against Kuwait, and a frontier dispute of long standing. The independent statehood of Kuwait was the creation of a colonialist era, as was that of Iraq itself. Yet given all this, the use of force to annex a peaceful neighbour indicated at the very least that a dangerous predator, of an all too familiar kind, was once more at large on the international scene. Perhaps the West in general, and President Bush in particular, might not have reacted so strongly if Kuwait had produced only broccoli; but if Kuwait had produced broccoli instead of oil, Saddam would hardly have bothered to seize it.

With Kuwait in his possession, Saddam would control 20 per cent of the world's oil resources directly, and by dominating Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates would have been in a position to control very nearly half. He had his thumb on the windpipe of the entire industrial world. Moreover, he was — although we did not know it at the time — close to acquiring nuclear weapons. Like 1914 and 1939, this was one of those very rare occasions when it was in our highest national interest to enforce the obligations of international law.

About this the West was almost unanimous in August 1990. But must these obligations be enforced by war? There were weighty arguments against it, advanced in America by figures as eminent as Senator Sam Nunn and Admiral William Crowe, and in this country by Denis Healey. The casualties would be terrible. The whole of Islam would be inflamed against us. Better to let economic sanctions take their course. For a few weeks I believed the same. Until it became clear how skillfully Saddam was exploiting the divisions between his opponents and how indifferent he was to the hardships sanctions



Just warriors: euphoric American marines wave a Kuwaiti flag, as they free Kuwait City

would impose on the Iraqi people. Evidently he believed that time was on his side, and he was probably right. If Kuwait was to be liberated, an ultimatum had to be issued, and if that ultimatum was ignored, it would have to be enforced.

Never can war aims have been so carefully and explicitly crafted. This was not a war either to defend democracy in Kuwait or to introduce it in Iraq. It was not fought to topple Saddam. The object was deliberately limited to the restoration of the sovereignty of Kuwait, the

exaction of compensation from Iraq, and the creation of peace and stability in the Middle East. Many people now wish that the objectives had been extended to cover his overthrow, but this was not the consensus within the coalition. And what were the alternatives to Saddam's regime? Direct rule, with General Schwarzkopf playing the role of General MacArthur? Allied forces remaining to support a docile military or civilian leadership and becoming the targets of Islamic hatred as long as they remained? The

disintegration of Iraq, provoking further conflict among its neighbours? Unsatisfactory as the present situation is it is not obvious that any of these would have been better.

The coalition armed forces did exactly what their political leaders demanded. An implicit clause in their instructions was that they should conduct the campaign with minimal risk to allied lives: it was by no means clear how the American public would react to the reality of the 30,000 casualties that military experts postulated in the worst

eventuality. The prolonged bombardment that preceded the actual land assault in the Gulf had its precedent in the bomber offensive that preceded the Normandy landings in 1944.

This time, however, it was not necessary to destroy entire cities and their populations: technology had at last made possible the highly discriminate bombing that both British and American air-forces had initially hoped to carry out when the second world war began. To talk of "surgical strikes" is still an exaggeration (unless one is thinking of medieval surgery), but there can be no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Iraqi casualties were not civilians but potential combatants.

Critics have complained that allied intelligence hugely over-estimated the effectiveness of the Iraqi armed forces. But the fault was very much on the right side. Weapons may be quantifiable, but morale is not. We made a much worse mistake in our underestimation of the Japanese before 1941. In any event it remains an open question how effectively Iraqi troops might have fought if their command and communications structure had not been destroyed, if their supply system had remained in working order, and if their morale had not been pulverised by weeks of direct and heavy bombing. As it turned out, the land combat was merely a brief mopping-up operation, but it would have been criminal to assume in advance that this would be the case.

Despite the brevity and one-sidedness of the combat, the homecoming troops were greeted in the United States as if they had won a war, combining the rigours of the Battle of Guadalcanal with that of the Somme. The demons of Vietnam had been exorcised, and America could stand tall again. But media hype cannot detract from the success of a necessary job performed with great professionalism. The achievement of the coalition forces made it all the less likely that such a job will have to be done again.

Sir Michael Howard is professor of modern history at Yale University.



...and moreover

PHILIP HOWARD

"Whom are you?" said she, for she had been to Benenden. Subjunctive to the last. I would reply: "And whom, madam, might you be?" Humankind cannot bear very much grammar. What we have is drummed into us at an early age, so that our knuckles tingle in a Pavlovian reaction when we spot certain grammatical errors or fetiches.

Concord is a red rag to the bulls of letters to the editor. Concord is the rule that a verb has to be of the same number and person as its subject, an adjective has to be of the same number, case and gender as its noun, and a noun of the same case as that to which it is in apposition. Let us not get too heavy about this. It is Saturday morning.

Concord is one of the things that tend(s) to go wrong with writing and talking as hasty and extemporaneous as journalism. So we put plural subjects with a single verb, or less commonly, single subjects with a plural verb. And so, as surely as night follows day, we get letters of triumph or complaint from indignant readers.

I have just received a bundle of cuttings from recent issues of *The Times* with errors of concord fiercely marked in yellow felt-tipped pen: "The coolness and calm of the interior IS an elegant and accomplished example..." "Wit and wisdom triumphs (in a headline, for heaven's sake): the dictionary never caught on with the general public as much as its gener-

ous size and scope deserves". Let us see whether we can get a bit of concord into this discord of numbers. The rules are not as simple as they are supposed by prescriptivists to be. Rules never are, except in nursery games. A compound subject consisting of two or more singular nouns or noun phrases, joined by and or linked with commas, normally takes a plural verb. The Walrus and the Carpenter were walking close at hand.

Difficulty arises when a phrase containing "and" represents a single item. It is then followed by a singular verb. The stars and stripes (or hammer and sickle) was flying from the flagpole (it is one flag, not two). Rock 'n' roll is my favourite Saturday pastime. The Pool and Firkin (a single pub) sells good beer. Your whisky and soda (one glass, not two) is on the table. Fish and chips was a healthy diet for the working classes.

Somerset Maugham: "The bread and butter [bread spread with butter] was scattered on the floor." But if these subjects linked by "and" are not thought of as single units, they become plurals. Bread and butter are sold at Mrs Puntan's shop.

It is sometimes not clear whether the subject is a single unit or a plural. When Henry Kissinger declared: "We're at the beginning of a period in which real negotiation and compromise is possible," presumably he was thinking of negotiation-and-compromise as a single closely bound-up activ-

ity (or else the good doctor simply got his numbers in a twist). I think we could defend, if we could be bothered, some of the "errors" complained of in *The Times* in this way, claiming that the compound subjects were seen as a single unit. The wit-and-wisdom is such a common cliché, in the titles of such slim vols as *The Wit and Wisdom of John Major* (or Neil Kinnock), that it may sound natural to treat the phrase as a composite singular. The generous size-n-scope of a dictionary is a sort of honorary singular. No? Well, I tried.

Certainly, the number of many compound subjects is ambiguous. Law and order has/have been re-established. Our respect and admiration for her are/is unlimited. Love and marriage is the ambition of all Cartland's vacuous heroines. But love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage, because the meaning of the rhyme forces the two elements into plural harness.

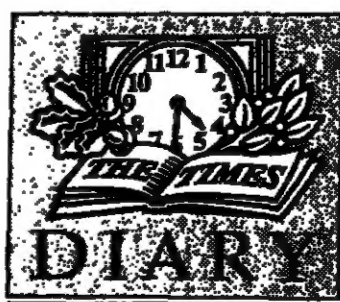
If the two parts of the subject refer to a single individual, use the singular. My friend and libel lawyer Crispin Quick-Buck was present. My son and heir is safe. The singular is also required when "and" introduces something in parenthesis or apposition. Your style, and even your handwriting, is worthy of much improvement. Deep waters. Watson. Like most things, in grammar and elsewhere, it is not the black and white rules that are interesting, but the grey ambiguities in between.

Pickpocket slide rule

IN ONE of the most outrageous election gimmicks of all, the Tory party is to give away one million pocket slide rules, designed to illustrate how much tax payers will lose under a Labour government. The Tories' "secret weapon", which they hope will win them the increasingly bitter tax war, will be unveiled early next week by Norman Lamont and Chris Patten. The slide rule will enable voters to relate their salary to Labour's tax plans and work out exactly how much they are likely to lose.

The device, which will be marketed as the "pocket guide to Labour's pickpocket tax", will be delivered to one million homes in marginal constituencies, mostly in the South-East where higher-paid voters have the most to lose. So convinced are the Tories that the stunt will help them win the election that £70,000 is being spent on the slide rules. Central Office staff have been sworn to strict secrecy over the gimmick. "Not only will we be telling people how much a Labour government will cost them," says a spokesman, "we will be able to demonstrate to the penny the horrendous cost it will have on every family."

Brussels was rightly keen to support Book Aid, the scheme to send thousands of copies to the former Soviet Union. But in best EC traditions, the Eurocrats could not work out quite how to help. Are books entertainment — in which case there is no budget — or are they education? Conveniently overlooking some of the more down-market titles, Roger Cooft of Book Aid supplied a list of the loftier books which are being shipped out. The result: a pledge of 50,000 ecus.



Cook and Duchess

THE death of a devoted family retainer has caused heated feelings in the family of Margaret, the Duchess of Argyll. The Duchess, aged 79, only learnt of the death of Elizabeth Duckworth, her cook and confidante for 62 years, after an obituary in *The Times* last week. She is deeply distressed that she missed the funeral and is blaming her own family.

"It's disgraceful," says the Duchess, who has lived at St George's Nursing Home in Fimleth since financial problems forced an abrupt departure two years ago from her suite at the Grosvenor Hotel. "My children did not even tell me that she had died. We should all have been at her funeral after her devoted service."

In fact, it seems the Duchess of Argyll's children, Frances, Duchess of Rutland, and Brian Sweeney, were also unaware of the death of the servant who had virtually brought them up. Barbara Green, Mrs Duckworth's sister-in-law, says: "I didn't contact them when she died. I didn't see any point. There has been complete silence from the family ever since the Duchess left the Grosvenor."

There had also been a modest £50 a month pension for her old employer which ceased when the

Duchess's finances collapsed. As a result the former family servant spent the last two years of her life on social security, although the author, Michael Thornton, took up Mrs Duckworth's plight.

"I informed the family of her financial difficulties but only Charles Sweeney, the Duchess's first husband, sent £100. No one went to see Mrs Duckworth when I told them she was desperately ill."

But Margaret Argyll says: she will never forget the woman she had known for over 60 years. "She was my truest friend since I was a girl. I shall miss her dreadfully."

Red fingers

WHETHER a thousand flowers will bloom in Slovenia remains to be seen but at least one new blossom is bursting forth. Will McLewin, a mathematician turned botanist, has returned from Slovenia with what he believes to be a previously unknown species.

McLewin visits Yugoslavia twice a year to research rare species and was understandably excited when

a friend put him on the trail of a *Hebeboris niger*, the Christmas rose, in a previously unknown shade of red. Braving freak blizzards and army vehicles, he eventually located the plant at a lake at Bohin in East Slovenia. McLewin is now cultivating several of the plants in his nursery.

If Zviad Gamsakhurdia's return to Georgia goes wrong, will academics at Queen Mary College, London, come to his rescue? The college's Russian department has a close affinity with the ousted leader. In 1977, when as a Georgian dissident he faced arrest by the KGB, the college dreamed up an unsuccessful plot to get him out of the Soviet Union by inviting him to deliver a series of lectures in England. Undeterred, the university proposed Gamsakhurdia as its external examiner on a thesis on Ukrainian and Georgian relations. The idea was vetoed by the student on the grounds that Gamsakhurdia had once assaulted her.

Long way to Piccadilly

THE Royal Academy's Mantegna exhibition which opened yesterday has some surprising gaps. While paintings have been shipped to Piccadilly from all over the world, the National Gallery, only a few hundred yards away in Trafalgar Square, was less than cooperative.

Only one of the National's five Mantegnas has made the journey — and that will not be travelling on to the showing at the Met in New York, either.

Officially the RA is very understanding. "Obviously the National Gallery does not want blank spaces. Some of the pieces are panel paintings and very fragile." Indeed, but so are some of the other paintings which have travelled half-way around the world.





REAPPRAISING THE GULF

The Gulf war is not yet history. It is too soon to reflect in tranquillity the 40 days of fighting. The results have turned out to be less complete and clearer than appeared at the time. So the avalanche of comment on yesterday's first anniversary of the outbreak of the war has been marked less by self-congratulatory commemorations of a highly successful military operation than by anxious reappraisal of a continuing policy dilemma for America and its allies.

The inevitable reaction to the initial one-sided presentation of the victory as a relatively costless demonstration of Western military superiority should not go too far the other way. Redressing the balance does not alter the crucial point that the American-led action was, and remains, fully justified. It was right to reverse President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. A broad coalition was assembled against Iraq, the United Nations Security Council was activated after 40 years of Cold War torpor and the liberation of Kuwait was achieved swiftly through a skilfully executed military operation. The aims of successive UN resolutions were largely achieved. Nearly a year later, Kuwait remains liberated and is being rebuilt, and the West is assured of plentiful and relatively cheap oil from Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Gulf.

The formal mission set by President Bush was accomplished. The balance sheet looks more mixed in respect of America's less explicit goals. The energy and drive of James Baker, the American secretary of state, has forced Israelis and Arabs to the same negotiating table but not yet to any real change in attitudes. Freed from an immediate Iraqi threat, the Gulf states have also shown little willingness to embrace political change.

Mr Bush's often repeated talk of a "new world order" has not yet materialised. The international coalition organised against Iraq has been less a precedent for further co-operation against threats to peace than a response to a particular threat. The disintegration of the Soviet Union has removed a possible partner in such efforts, while the American public have shown little interest in their country's role as global policeman.

PARADOX OF INFLATION

Yesterday's rise in retail price inflation, sometimes a figure of transcendental political significance, was greeted by politicians of all parties with uncharacteristic reticence. The Tory backbenchers did not panic. Norman Lamont did not reach for his excuse book. The strongest denunciations came from the Labour benches.

At first blush, this is surprising. These are not, in conventional terms, good figures. Inflation is now running at 4.5 per cent compared with a low of 3.7 per cent in November. British prices are rising faster than those in our major competitors in Europe (Germany, France) and outside (the US and Japan). Moreover, the retail price index has been artificially depressed by the steady fall in mortgage rates: underlying "core" inflation is a couple of points higher than the headline total. The prime minister claimed in September that the government had "got inflation licked". It is proving an incautious claim for a cautious politician.

At past elections, it might have proved a fatal one. In 1964, the general election with which 1992 is commonly compared, the pollsters found that 77 per cent of those polled rated "the cost of living" as the most important issue facing Britain. (Inflation was then running at 2.4 per cent.) More recently, the political message of the early 1980s was that the government could survive high unemployment, so long as inflation was coming down. Unemployment was something that happened to manual workers up north. It left Tory voters unaffected. But inflation did hurt them and they wanted an end to it. Hence Margaret Thatcher's success.

Times have changed. Unemployment is now felt by southern, white-collar, Tories. Inflation is less of a threat. Indeed — whisper it who dares! — it is a bit of inflation that gradually makes a mighty mortgage afford-

The main blemish on the Gulf victory has been the continuation in power of Saddam, as the Iraqi propaganda machine has crudely reminded everyone this week. American troops tried to kill him during the war and Mr Bush encouraged Iraqi officers and dissidents to oust him. The American president raised hopes which he was unwilling and unable to fulfil, partly triggering the bloody and fruitless Shia revolt in March.

But Saddam's military and internal security machine, though battered, remains intact. For the moment the Kurds in the north retain their independence; though, apart from scant humanitarian help, they have been largely cast off by the West. Mr Bush and his senior advisers may go on saying they expect Saddam to fall before long, but there is no real evidence that this is about to happen. The advice from the Pentagon is clearly against direct action in support of an internal revolt; and Washington is reluctant to provide indirect aid to rebel groups as it did in Angola and Afghanistan.

But caution does not imply impotence. Continued UN economic sanctions have largely isolated Iraq and brought at least some stability to the region. Moreover, the much tried and tested UN inspectors have succeeded in finding and destroying much of Iraq's vast nuclear, chemical and biological unconventional weapons programme. The best that America and its allies, notably Britain and France, can do is to maintain their support of the inspectors, and to threaten air strikes against military strikes if the Baghdad regime again obstructs their work. The allies can also seek to prevent Iraq from acquiring nuclear materials and expertise from the former Soviet Union.

By seeking to change the internal politics of Iraq when neither American nor international opinion is willing to take the necessary military action, however, Washington risks doing more harm than good. Above all what America and its allies must aim to do is to stop Saddam being in a position to threaten his neighbours. Continued success in that, undramatic though it may be, will prove the ultimate justification for the Gulf war.

able. It is inflation that will lift off grounded house prices. In a credit-addicted society, those who gain from seeing what they owe eroded may even outweigh those who lose from seeing their savings reduced. So long as your earnings rise faster than prices, moderate inflation can do you good.

Inflation is therefore a non-issue. According to Mori, it is raised among the top two issues facing Britain today by fewer than one voter in ten. Nor would Labour be sensible to try to make it an issue. The polls also show that people trust the Tories more over inflation, just as they trust Labour more over unemployment. The more inflation becomes the election issue, the better the Tories are likely to do. Hence Mr Smith's low key.

Should it be an issue? If the main parties had different views on the subject, then their reticence would be deplorable. The electorate would be deprived of the debate essential to its democratic decision by narrow partisan calculation. Just such a debate, in one form or another, was the centrepiece of election campaigns in the Seventies and Eighties with first incomes policies then monetarism at the centre of the gap between the parties.

It is no longer. Both parties officially eschew an incomes policy. They compete in their restraint over borrowing. They favour Britain's membership of the exchange-rate mechanism of the European monetary system, which forces governments to adhere to anti-inflationary disciplines. Labour no longer wants rigid price controls. The Tories no longer advocate rigid monetary controls. On inflation at least, consensus rules.

The economic forecasters tend to agree on what is likely to happen to prices in the next couple of years: they are most likely to increase, or, slightly below, the present rate. The economy could live with that. So could the people. On this issue at least, the parties can safely forgo electoral *Sturm und Drang*.

HIGH ON THE HILL

The burghers of Hampstead have lost another battle in their war against the burgers of America. McDonald's, which has been trying to set up shop in the north London literary enclave for more than a decade, has at last won a site with planning permission for a restaurant. Chicken McNuggets might indeed look out of place on the pages of a Margaret Drabble novel. But is the writer — and many other protesting residents like her — right to foist her taste on everyone else in the village?

"Hampstead socialist" has become a common derogatory epithet for such locals as Melvyn Bragg, Tom Conti and Miss Drabble herself. The sneer implies hypocrisy: how can they be socialists if they live in such a smart part of London? But this is pure inverted snobbery: in other countries there is no contradiction between being left-wing and leading a comfortable, even wealthy, life. But the battle of McDonald's does smell more strongly of hypocrisy than of ketchup.

The protests against McDonald's are part of a larger ennui. Hampstead has changed over the past ten years or so. New Hampstead is peopled by bankers, film foreigners, pop stars and property tycoons as much as by novelists, actors and publishers. The High Street, which used to house little family shops, is now full of expensive boutiques and restaurants. At weekends, flashy youngsters from the outer suburbs pack the streets where little old emigre Austrians ladies in fur coats used to potter before having coffee and cakes at the Louis patisserie.

Both the youngsters and the shop assis-

ants need somewhere cheap to eat. McDonald's would doubtless fit the bill. The worst argument being marshalled against it is that there are already too many restaurants in the area. If so, why is McDonald's so keen to move in? What the battling residents really mean is that they think McDonald's is uniquely naff. Yet what right have they to deprive others, less well-off than themselves, of the right to cheap and cheerful food?

Like the residents of Aspen, Colorado, the Hampstead set is furious that other people, whether they be *nouveaux riches* residents or Sunday trippers, have discovered the delights of their hilltop village. Having moved in decades ago, old Hampsteaders want to keep its joys to themselves. But among the complaints about the replacement of grocer's shops by designer labels, none has been heard about the steep rise in house prices that followed the discovery of Hampstead by the newcomers. Some longtime residents, in their splendid Georgian and early Victorian houses, have been turned into millionaires by the very people they despise.

McDonald's now needs to win planning permission for its frontage, and Hampstead holds some of the most beautiful architecture in the capital. The local council should be scrupulous in ensuring that, as in other historic towns, McDonald's is prepared to design a fascia to blend in with its surroundings. But permission should not be withheld on any but aesthetic grounds. For what old Hampsteaders really want is to keep out the hot polloi. And that is a most unsocialist way to behave.

Right of silence at Westminster

From Mr John Browne, MP for Winchester (Conservative)

Sir, I endorse Lord St John of Fawley's contention (article, January 15) that there is no right to silence before Parliament. However, under the common law of England there is such a right in court.

The key question before the Commons social security select committee, of which I am a member, was whether Parliament should exercise its awesome sovereign power to force anyone, in this case the Maxwells, to answer questions that may, even unintentionally, lead them to incriminate themselves.

With the possible exception of the Committee of Privileges, select committees are entrusted by Parliament not to judge cases but to conduct public scrutiny.

On Monday we witnessed a select committee attempting to conduct itself as a public tribunal before the probable hearing of a case in a high court of law. This surely must have been wrong on two grounds.

First, it would have abused the established human right to silence — an abuse which, whilst sometimes popular, would have been a major step in dismantling one of our hard-fought barriers against tyranny.

Secondly, it could have placed in serious jeopardy any case brought subsequently by the Serious Fraud Office. Any incriminating answers, or even innuendo and comment on the part of questioners, could have resulted in a trial by media, influencing the open mind of almost every potential juror. That might have placed a future judge under an obligation to dismiss any case brought against the Maxwell brothers.

I hope the House, in its wisdom, will let this matter lie in the hands of a fine and experienced judiciary. Meanwhile, Parliament should use its great influence upon the government in order to bring international political pressure to bear upon the trading and return of the pension holders' funds.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BROWNE,
House of Commons,
January 15.

From Mr Charles Utley

Sir, Lord St John of Fawley is surely wrong to urge the House of Commons to declare that witnesses called by select committees should not be allowed to rely on the common law privilege against self-incrimination.

The House of Commons is not subject, in regulating its affairs, to interference from the courts: it is for the House itself to decide whether its powers of interrogation should be limited to protect subjects. There appears to be no precedent for a claim by a subject to be allowed to invoke, before a committee of the House, the privilege against self-incrimination. It does not follow, however, that it would be a great constitutional disaster if the House chose to limit its powers in the interests of the people it serves.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant,
CHARLES UTLEY,
5 Essex Court, Temple, EC4A,
January 15.

From Mr J. Stefan Sierzant

Sir, With great respect to Mr George Carman, QC, the right to silence is not "constitutionally paramount" (report, January 14). If it were so, Parliament would not have enacted sections 432-434 of the Companies Act 1985, or sections 218-219 of the Insolvency Act 1986, or sections 177-178 of the Financial Services Act.

Each of these sections places a statutory requirement upon the person being questioned to make replies, without providing any protection to stop such replies being used as evidence for a criminal prosecution. Indeed, section 434(5) of the Companies Act specifically permits such use.

Parliament enacted all these measures. It is well able to deal with the position in which its social security select committee now finds itself.

Yours sincerely,
J. STEFAN SIERZANT,
J. S. Sierzant & Co (solicitors),
81 Bolton Street,
Chorley, Lancashire,
January 14.

From Mr Edward Strouts

Sir, Stephen Gilchrist's article on the right to silence (Law Times, January 14) is hard to follow. Indeed, justice should not be a game. The accused knows if he is guilty. A rule that gives him the right to silence makes justice a game and a very profitable one for some and very expensive for others, especially the taxpayer.

Someone who stands to lose their pension should be entitled to some answers from those with the facts, accused or not. The freedom to lie is another matter and its exercise another crime. And if you lie to Parliament, my goodness how awful and won't they be cross!

Yours faithfully,
EDWARD STROUTS,
Hillcroft, Lympstone,
Exmouth, Devon,
January 14.

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Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071) 782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Ulster: internment or more troops?

From Mr Norman Pearson

Sir, "During the Christmas holiday", writes Mr Edward Gorman ("How to stop the IRA", January 11), "the IRA terrorised people up and down the mainland with a fire-bombing campaign". I suggest the British people are not easily terrorised. Some may be frightened; but the vast majority are enraged at the disruption of every-day life.

Quoting some pessimistic comments attributed to the General Officer Commanding, Mr Gorman goes on to criticise the ineffectual policy of the British government. This includes the constant reshuffling of troops. But although we are at war with a resourceful and cunning enemy, Mr Gorman opposes internment, which he says would be counter-productive.

On the contrary, as Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien suggested (article, December 18), the time has surely come for the politicians to stop their talking and instead to intern all known malefactors. The upper echelons of the IRA number, we are told, about 300. That should be no great task. All are known. Cut off the IRA's head and it is defeated. I suggest no vast supervision thereafter would be needed. Let us disregard the shouts of disapproval from Mr Haughey, whose views we know, and the roars of disapproval from New York, Brussels and elsewhere.

The last internment policy was badly handled. Let this be better, so that the people of Ulster can once again enjoy a normal life, the taxpayers save enormous sums and our troops have a job worthy of them. And the British people, with an election in sight, may even pause from their bread and circuses to enjoy the unusual feeling of a strong hand on the helm.

Yours faithfully,
NORMAN PEARSON,
Brook House, Norton,
Malmesbury, Wiltshire,
January 13.

Values afloat

From Mr D. O. E. Batten

Sir, On January 8 an article by Mr Nicholas Ridley advocated the benefits of a fully floating exchange rate.

On January 14 two letters to *The Times* appeared side by side in response. One said "sterling must be allowed to float... so that the currency finds its true level on a gradual and ordered basis". The other said "if any government were to rely entirely on free market forces then the whole economy would just gradually run down". In two sentences the philosophical contrast between *laissez-faire* and centralised control was laid out for all to see.

Aid for North-West

From Mr Adrian Webb

Sir, As one of the co-organisers of the conference at Manchester airport on December 4 entitled "North West 2010 — The Need to Plan" at which John Smith, the shadow Chancellor, first committed himself to the concept of a North-West development agency, the Town and Country Planning Association obviously welcomes the report by Philip Webber (January 14) that Mr Smith, together with Gordon Brown and Tony Blair, have confirmed their commitment to the regional approach. The association is, however,

Ulster: internment or more troops?

From Sir Philip Goodhart, MP for Beckenham (Conservative)

Sir, In response to the latest series of IRA attacks, the security forces have put more road blocks around Belfast, while your correspondent, Edward Gorman, says that the strength of the army in Northern Ireland should be substantially increased. Some Unionist spokesmen have also called for the introduction of selective internment.

Perhaps the road blocks have deterred some bomb carriers, but road blocks inevitably increase the disruption of traffic that the IRA itself wants to achieve.

Perhaps the increase in the size of the British military presence which Edward Gorman wants might put more pressure on some terrorists, but there is not much evidence to support the argument that ordinary patrols stop urban terrorism and this policy would add to the problem of over-stretch in the army.

Meanwhile, there is little support from the main political parties for selective internment, which is widely believed to be counter-productive.

A rejection of internment need not mean that the supporters of terrorism should be left undisturbed. When a substantial bombing campaign is mounted against the general public, the Royal Ulster Constabulary, and other police forces, have a right and a duty to interrogate — say at inconvenient times — people who might have valuable information about these outrages.

Furthermore, a large number of convicted terrorists in Northern Ireland, freed on parole after serving half their sentence, might be required to report daily to police stations while the bombing campaign continues.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP GOODHART,
(Under secretary of state,
Northern Ireland, 1979-81),
House of Commons,
January 15.

Values, in the form of exchange rates and the purchasing power of money, tend to find their own level like water, and if allowed to do so unimpeded there is little disruption to everyday life. But values, like water, can be constrained artificially by economic dams and we all know that the breaching of a dam can cause great chaos.

Nothing can be sustained against natural forces for ever and perhaps, therefore, the option of continual gradual adjustment is preferable to any of the alternatives.

Yours faithfully,
D. O. E. BATTEN,
Christmas Cottage,
Ridlington, Oxford, Rutland.

very concerned at the essential weakness of present Labour party policy. As I said at the conference, regional strategic planning must be in the hands of elected regional councils. Agencies and local-authority consultative arrangements are at best interim measures, not least when a number of the local authorities concerned may well disappear in the present government's proposed reorganisation of local government.

Yours faithfully,
ADRIAN WEBB (Deputy Director),
Town and Country
Planning Association,
17 Carlton House Terrace, SW1.

Role of Opus Dei

From the Postulator General of Opus Dei

Sir, Your leader, "Non nobis Opus Dei" (January 13), is unfair and misleading both about Opus Dei and the circumstances relating to its founder's beatification.

Since its foundation in 1928, Opus Dei's message has been of the dignity of lay people within the Church and of the need for the great majority of Catholics to lead their Christian lives fully immersed in the world.

This emphasis on a lay spirituality was, paradoxically perhaps in view of some modern criticism, the cause of misunderstanding and opposition from some members of the establishment in Spain in the 1940s. But it has since been recognised, by many of the most authoritative leaders in the Church, as of the utmost importance to the life of the Church in the modern world: indeed, it is a

central message which came from the Second Vatican Council.

The forthcoming beatification of Opus Dei's founder, the Venerable Josemaria Escriva, cannot be interpreted politically as a sign of Opus Dei's influence on the Holy See. Applying the logic of politics to the ecclesial act reveals a misunderstanding of the nature of the act itself.

The acknowledgment of the sanctity of life of a man signifies that he belongs to the spiritual tradition that precedes him. There is nothing more foreign to the reality of Opus Dei than a sectarian spirit: Christian fraternity belongs to the very essence of the founder's teaching.

You give a misleading account of the background to the forthcoming beatification. Although the progress of the cause has been swift, this is principally because the case was remarkably clear, in 11,000 pages of evidence, including all the objections against the cause.

Killer magpies

From Lord Martin Fitzalan Howard

Sir, I support Mr R. E. H. Edmonds (letter, January 9) on the effectiveness of magpie traps and the consequent increase in smaller bird life. During the 1991 nesting season we have caught 61 magpies by use of the trap, which is simple to make. Food and water must be provided for the decay and checked every day.

Occasionally other than magpies have been caught in the trap, including two well-grown fox cubs at a fortnight's interval in my nephew's similar trap, which were released in the morning.

Yours faithfully,
M. FITZALAN HOWARD,
Carlton Towers,
Goole, Humberside,
January 10.

From Mr T. J. Godfrey

Sir, So Mr Edmonds has taken upon himself the onerous task of deciding which wild creatures should survive and prosper in his locality.

There is every possibility that the increase of blackbirds and thrushes singing in Mr Edmonds's garden last summer had absolutely nothing at all to do with his destruction of 22 magpies earlier that spring. These songsters would have been adult males which had presumably survived being eaten as nestlings by magpies (or by cats, stoats, weasels, sparrowhawks, etc.) in the previous year(s).

It seems to me that Mr Edmonds's songbirds are doing very well without his meddling.

Yours faithfully,
T. GODFREY,
7 Lynton Lane,
Cassington, Oxford,
January 9.

From Mrs Theresa Stanbridge

Sir, Man continues to deprive wild creatures of more and more of their natural habitat and to interfere chemically with their food sources. Consequently the magpie is blamed for excess damage and theft while it

Commonwealth library's future

From Dr Charles Armour

Sir, The closure and imminent sale of the Royal Commonwealth Society's library have highlighted a serious gap in procedures to save national cultural treasures. In this case a unique and remarkable library, relevant to all members of the Commonwealth.

For art treasures a combination of private and government funding can be invoked to prevent masterpieces being sold to overseas buyers. There is no such recognised procedure to safeguard specialised libraries held by charitable trusts.

It would seem very appropriate that this library, whose value has been endorsed in recent months by numerous scholars in letters to the national press, not least in your own columns (December 17, 24), should be re-endowed by benefaction as the Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Library, on the understanding that the government will make one substantial donation to fund the necessary running costs as a working library.

Such action, from private benefactor and public purse, would very appropriately mark the 40 years that Her Majesty the Queen will soon have been head of the Commonwealth, to which her commitment has been demonstrably impeccable.

I have no doubt the Royal African Society would want to continue its annual donation to this reconstructed library, as it has done in the past to its much appreciated predecessor over many years.

Yours faithfully,
CHARLES ARMOUR
(Honorary Treasurer),
The Royal African Society,
School of Oriental and
African Studies,
Thornhurst Street, WC1.

Straight from the Bard

From Lady Hylton

Sir, The interesting reference in your leader of January 11 to Felicity Horatio's illiterate friend, may be taken further. Ever since the admirable Katharine Whitehorn pointed to Queen Gertrude's oddly-named dogs (Ghosh: "But look, Amazement on thy mother's side: O step between her and her fighting soul") directors of *Hamlet* have fought shy of a closet scene carpeted with a trothful maelstrom of dumb chums. May we now try to clear up the mystery of the bit-player, stooge or stage-hand, Patrick or Patricia?

Pat is at the Prince's elbow in Horatio's absence (*Hamlet*: "Now might I do it, Pat, now he is praying"). In *King Lear* he shadows Edmund the Bastard (Edmund: "Pat he comes, like the catastrophe") and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he may be found in the company of Quince ("Pat, Pat: and here's a marvelous convenient place for our rehearsal").

Another appearance, in the same play (Pyramus: "It will fall, Pat, as I told you"), may indicate inefficiency; and he can also be unpunctual (Old lady: "Nor could come Pat betwixt too early or too late for any suit of pounds", *Henry VIII*).

Who is it that can inform me?

(*Hamlet*).
Yours faithfully,
J. HYLTON,
Ammerdown House,
Radstock, Bath, Somerset.

Moreover, it is quite wrong to suggest that there was special influence in the Vatican. In fact, the cause of Mgr Escriva was supported by the widest range of senior church figures of many nationalities, including, for example, Cardinal König of Austria, Cardinal Sin of the Philippines, and the late Archbishop Romero of El Salvador.

Finally, in the light of the erroneous remarks made about Mgr Escriva's alleged Nazi sympathies (report, January 13), it may be of interest to your readers to learn that all the witnesses of the process explicitly denied such sympathies and confirmed Mgr Escriva's deep love for the Jews. That is why there are today a good number of Jews who are co-operators and friends of Opus Dei.

Sincerely yours,
FLAVIO CAPUCCI,
Postulator General, Opus Dei,
Viale Bruno Buozzi 75,
00197 Rome.

is only struggling to survive in the environment that is left to it.

On this property we maintain a feeding programme which tries to compensate for the deprivation caused to wild life. We feed birds and squirrels daily with a variety of nuts and seeds. The result is that we have at least 24 breeds of bird visiting our garden.

Yours faithfully,
THERESA STANBRIDGE,
30 Goodby Road,
Moseley, Birmingham 13,
January 12.

From Colonel J. L. Galloway

Sir, It seems a bit hard of Mr Edmonds to destroy 22 beautiful magpies because they reduce his songbirds, which are also carnivores. With a long-playing cassette and a concealed garden speaker he could enjoy hours of varied birdsong.

Yours faithfully,
J. L. GALLOWAY,
Hill Cross, Halletts Shute,
Freshwater, Isle of Wight.

BBC 1

7.25 News and weather (2831632)
 7.30 Crystal Tipps and Allstars. Animation (r) (4667215) 7.35 Wiz Bang Fun and games (s) (9129625) 7.45 The Jetsons. Space cartoon series (r) (8603012)
 8.05 Eggs 'n' Baker. Cheryl Baker's music and cookery series. The Baker's edition is devoted to vegetables (7947418) 8.35 Thundercats. Cartoon adventures (r) (2560876)
 9.00 Going Live! presented by Sarah Greene and Philip Schofield. The presents include the editor of the Sunday Express, Eve Pollard, who presents the late night TV discussion series *The Truth About Women*, world champion mountaineer Tim Gould and environmentalist Jonathan Pomri (s) (70143031) 12.12 Weather (5258166)
 12.15 Grandstand introduced by Steve Rider. The line-up is (subject to alteration). 12.20, 12.40 and 1.20 Rugby Union: a preview of this afternoon's opening matches in the Five Nations championship: 12.25, 12.55 and 1.30 Racing from Haydock Park: 1.10 News: 1.15 Cricket highlights of the first day's play in the first Test between New Zealand and England at Christchurch. 1.45 Rugby Union: live coverage of the Calcutta Cup match at Murrayfield between Scotland and England followed by live coverage of the second half of the game at Lansdowne Road between Ireland and Wales. The commentators in Edinburgh are Bill McLaren and Bill Beaumont. In Dublin, Nigel Starnes-Smith and Hugo MacNeill. Northern Ireland and Wales live coverage of all of Ireland v Wales. 4.35 Final Score (90070437)
 5.05 News and weather (3951079) Wales (to 5.50) Wales on Saturday
 5.15 Regional News and sport (7951079) Wales (to 5.50) Wales on Saturday
 5.20 One to Win. Andrew O'Connor introduces three more trivia quiz contestants hoping to win a luxury holiday (Coastal) (s) (7767692)
 5.50 Noel's House Party. Resistant fun and games with Noel Edmonds and his guests Dennis Quilley and Nicholas Parsons (929012)
 6.40 Big Break. Snooker and general knowledge quiz game hosted by Jim Davidson with John Virgo. The guests are Dennis Taylor, Tony Duguid and Mike Hallett. (Coastal) (s) (690206)
 7.10 The Paul Daniels Magic Show. Among tonight's illusions is our chirpy host trying to escape from a solid, all-right box. Also making an appearance are Canadian acrobat Jean Nédélec and Juan Mayoral, a magician from Spain. (Coastal) (s) (568079)
 7.55 Moon and Son. Amiable thriller series from Robert Banks Stewart of *Bergerac* starring Millicent Martin as the psychic sleuth Gladys Moon and John Michie as her more down-to-earth investigator son Trevor. Tonight they use respective talents to investigate the disappearance in Normandy of a young mechanic, Joe Thorpe, who lived to play at being an American soldier. (Coastal) (s) (595857)
 8.50 News with Marilyn Lewis. (Coastal) Sport and weather (733215)
 9.10 That's Life! Consumer affairs investigations presented by Esther Rantzen. (Coastal) (889693)
 9.50 Midnight Caller: The Language Barrier. The stylish adventures of Jack Kilien (Richard O'Connell), a late night showman who is called to investigate a clash between San Francisco's Chinese and Italian communities when he hears the topic of ethnic unrest after his producer Billy Po is a victim of a racially-motivated attack. With Dennis Dun and Wendy Kilbourne (s) (840963)
 10.40 Film: *The Medusa Touch* (1978) starring Richard Burton and Lee Remick. Far-fetched paranormal thriller about a man who claims he has the power to create catastrophe but leaves his psychics unconvinced. Directed by Jack Gold (8123326)
 12.25am Weather (6051258)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
 The numbers now appearing next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to instantly programme your video recorder with a VideoPlus+ handset. VideoPlus+ can be used with most video. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. For more details call VideoPlus on 0839 121204 (calls charged at 40p per minute peak, 30p off-peak) or write to VideoPlus, VTM Ltd, 7 Fulham Palace Road, London W8 8JA. VideoPlus+, VideoPlus+ and Video PlusCodes are trademarks of Gemstar Marketing Ltd.

Evil psyche: Richard Burton with Lee Remick (10.40pm)

SATELLITE

Where the Days (29188) 1.30 Holiday Destinations (29285) 2.30 Fashion TV (48363) 3.30 Those Who Were the Days (67437) 4.30 Our World (6952) 5.30 Live at Five (29780) 6.30 Newsline Weekend (29588) 7.30 Fashion TV (6952) 8.30 Holiday Destinations (29188) 9.30 Newsline Weekend (29588) 10.30 Our World (6952) 11.30 Live at Five (29780) 12.30 Newsline Weekend (29588) 1.30 Our World (6952) 2.30 Our World (6952) 3.30 Our World (6952) 4.30 Our World (6952) 5.30 Our World (6952) 6.30 Our World (6952) 7.30 Our World (6952) 8.30 Our World (6952) 9.30 Our World (6952) 10.30 Our World (6952) 11.30 Our World (6952) 12.30 Our World (6952) 1.30 Our World (6952) 2.30 Our World (6952) 3.30 Our World (6952) 4.30 Our World (6952) 5.30 Our World (6952) 6.30 Our World (6952) 7.30 Our World (6952) 8.30 Our World (6952) 9.30 Our World (6952) 10.30 Our World (6952) 11.30 Our World (6952) 12.30 Our World (6952) 1.30 Our World (6952) 2.30 Our World (6952) 3.30 Our World (6952) 4.30 Our World (6952) 5.30 Our World 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7.15 Film: Texas Lady (1955) Starring Claudette Colbert, Benito family western about a crusading newspaper owner and her battles with two cattle barons holding a town to ransom. With Barry Sullivan and Greg Morris. Directed by Tim Whelan (800987)

8.40 The Four Great Seasons. In the third of his four-part series David Bellamy examines the effects of man and the elements on the dunes of northern England (p. 600583)

9.10 News and weather (457/797) 9.15 Getting Through. A portrait of Denise Smith who, although numb from the neck down, was named *The Sunday Times* sports woman of the year in 1990 (7039703)

9.30 This is the Day. Prayer and reflection from the home of Amnesty International. Supporter Liz Healey. (69906) 10.00 See Hear! Magazine series: the hearing impaired (93277) (110393) In Print: Skilshop 10.55 Advice Shop (1937) The end of a new series of consumer advice, introduced by Helen Madden (773763)

11.00 The Training Hour beginning with *Print*. Design tips for desktop publishers (r) (8093) Wales: (to 12.30) See You Sunday

11.20 Skilshop. Advice on jobs and training (9722)

12.00 Breakfast. A healthy diet edition from the grounds of Fairfield (r) (625522) 12.05 Experience 12. A series of scientific demonstrations begins with how to print a T-shirt (553093)

12.30 Country File. Rural issues considered by John Craven (653015) 12.55 Weather (7270635) Wales: Farming in Wales

1.00 News (3962426) followed by *On the Record*. Jonathan Dimbleby talks to environment secretary Michael Heseltine about the measures and the housing market (256816)

2.00 EndEnder. Omnibus edition (r) (64906)

2.00 Film: The Moving Target (1956) starring Paul Newman, Lauren Bacall and Julie Harris. Down-at-heel gunshots Lew Harper is hired to investigate the missing husband of a wealthy couple. Confronted private eye thriller from the novel by Ross MacDonell. Directed by Robert Siodmak (553093)

2.55 The Clothes Show. Includes an item on fashion shoes for women with big feet (773819)

3.30 Antiques Roadshow. Hugh Scully and the team of experts visit Farnham in Surrey, where among the interesting pieces is a 19th century cabinet rescued from a sunken barge. (Coefax) (946635)

3.45 Play It Safe. Advice on preventing scalding to children. (Coefax) (78242)

3.55 News with Moira Stuart. Weather (629206)

4.00 Songs of Praise from the Church of St. Basil, Haarlem, The Netherlands. (Coefax) (140819)

7.15 'Allo 'Allo! More unadvised fun from the French Resistance. Herr Flick, in his search for the missing portrait of the fallen Madonna, injects Helga with a fruit cake extracted from the self-inflating Peruvian marsh frog. (Coefax) (r) (675529)

7.45 Lovejoy. Ian McShane as the shady antiques dealer, so blinded by love for an old school friend of Lady Jane's that he mistakes fake watercolours for the real thing. With Joanna Lumley and Phyllis Logan and a script by the reliable Roger Marshall (Coefax) (s) (610693)

8.40 As Time Goes By. Likeable, understanding comedy written by Bob Larbey and starring Judy Dench and Geoffrey Palmer as a fifty-something couple who meet again after being lovers 38 years before. (Coefax) (s) (279118)



Destructive affair: Deriva Kirwan and Ronald Pickup (9.10pm)

9.10 A Time to Dances. Episode two of Melvyn Bragg's frank adaptation of his novel about the destructive affair between a middle-aged bank manager and a teenage girl in the Lake District. Ronald Pickup and a promising high actress, Deriva Kirwan, play the lovers, with Rosemary McKenna as Pickup's invalid wife. (Coefax) (s) (25757)

10.05 News with Michael Buerk. (Coefax) Weather (335722)

10.20 Everyman: Here's Looking at You. How far should people go to protect the health of unborn children? Jeanie Murray reports from Charleston, South Carolina (r). (Coefax) (955523)

11.00 The Nobel Century. The third of a four-part series on the 90-year-old story of the Nobel Prize (631235)

11.55 Melusheant (r) (784065) 12.30 Weather (6504632)

7.25 But First This on 2. Children's programmes beginning with *Hallo Speaker* (r) (9225797) 7.45 Playdays (r) (801426) 8.05 Two by Two (r) (1337703) 8.20 Babar (948680) 8.45 Telling Tales. Ancient stories with a modern message (736451) 9.00 The Legend of Prince Valiant (940897) 9.25 Blue Peter Omnibus (457608) 10.15 Defenders of the Earth (r). (Coefax) (334277) 10.40 Strangers. Mystery series (r). (Coefax) (118087) 11.10 Soapbox. Exploring work (659155) 11.50 The O-Zone (973722) 12.00 Regional Westminster Programmes (45513). Northern Ireland: Greening

12.30 Cricket. First Test. Highlights of the second day's play in the match at Christchurch between New Zealand and England (60364)

1.00 Film: Lassie's Great Adventure (1963) starring June Lockart and Hugh Riley. Lassie and her friends are accidentally taken by hot-air balloon to Canada, where they are befriended by a mute Indian. Directed by William Beaudine (77890)

2.30 Cruella 92. Highlights of the action events (s) (154)

3.00 Opera Session. A Village Romeo and Juliet. A film of Frederick Delius's fourth opera, a modern version of Shakespeare's tragic love story, made on location in rural Czechoslovakia. Arthur Davies and Helen Field sing the title roles with the Off Symphonic Orchestra and the Arnold Schoenberg Choir conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras (4) (48708)

5.00 Rugby Special. Highlights of yesterday's opening matches in the five nations championship (423)

6.00 Sky Sunday. The men's downhill from Kitzbühel (737109)

6.35 The Money Programme (65616)

7.15 Prisoners of the Sun.

CHOICE: Here is a new natural history series with much splendid footage and a complicated argument. It goes something like this. All life on earth is ultimately controlled by the sun. Humans as well as animals are the sun's prisoners. The key to this assertion is fuel, the subject of tonight's film. The challenge is to catch the sunshine and hold it. Plants are better at doing this than man. The film asserts that plants are the most effective solar power stations on earth, but, even so, they need water and raw materials to function properly. The theme is developed in trip to the redwood forests of California and the plains of east Africa. There is a thrilling sequence of a lion in pursuit of zebra and wildebeest. If the story is involved, the images are superb. At times you could almost shut off the sound and be carried along on the pictures. (Coefax) (20418)

8.05 Signs of the Times. Eight mothers and daughters speak frankly about each other's living rooms (57884)

8.55 Trying Times: Drive She Said. A tale of Angst in modern America. After George leaves her for a glamorous actress, Robin decides to take driving lessons (54780)

9.25 Did You See... Presented by Jeremy Paxman. Lord Deedes, Jill Gascoine and Angus review Churchill, Goodyear Cruise World and Barrymore (41072)



Winning the battle against alcoholism: Mark Rylands (10.05pm)

10.05 Screen Two: The Grass Arena.

CHOICE: A fall-and-rise story that would hardly be credible as fiction but happens to be true is brought sensitively but unsentimentally to the screen by writer Frank Deasy and director Gillies MacKinnon. John Rios (Mark Rylands) grows up unhappy in north London, raised by his father, a failed schoolmaster. For a time Rios plays a way out but drink takes over and he becomes an inhabitant of the "grass arena" of vagrant alcoholics. His unlikely salvation comes through prowess at the game of chess, a new battleground on which for once he can be a winner. The drama is built on the accumulation of small incidents, perfectly observed. The merit of MacKinnon's direction is that it stays local and does not sensationalise. It offers an apt framework for a transcendent performance by Rylands. His tragic plays for pity and always has the smack of truth. (Coefax) (938263)

11.25 Film: The Dresser (1963). Adaptation by Ronald Harwood of his stage hit about an overbearing actor-manager (Albert Finney) and his effeminate dresser (Tom Courtenay) on tour in England during the second world war. Unfortunately the performances belong more to the theatre than the cinema. Directed by Peter Yates (6441797) 1.30am Rapallo (r) (658046). Ends at 2.05

6.00 TV-am (6570905)

9.25 Diana and Cecil. The guests include one-man band Pete Moser, who attempts to play 158 instruments at once, and pop group Voice of the Beehive (512418)

10.45 Link. When he lost his sight 11 years ago, Professor John Hull thought it would be the end of his career, but he tells Peter Hull, it heralded the most creative period of his life (231684)

11.00 Morning Worship from St Mark's Church, Newnham, Cambridge (13529)

12.00 Encounter: Nothing is What it Seems. Professor Russell Stannard explains how belief in God helps make sense of modern physics (45557)

12.30 LWT News Weekend (6621451) 12.55 LWT Weather (72791703)

1.00 News with Fiona Armstrong. Weather (81378635)

1.10 1991 Canon World Triathlon Championships from Surfers Paradise, on the Gold Coast of Australia (8871722)

2.10 Sharp's Sunday beginning with *Batman* (b/w). A double bill starring Adam West (9748561). Followed at 2.40 by *Wrestling* action from the United States (446345)

2.50 Dinosaurs. Cartoon adventures of a family of domesticated prehistoric monsters (s) (6410703)

3.20 The Match. Live coverage of the game at Goodison Park between Everton and Nottingham Forest, introduced by Elton Wesley. The commentator is Alan Parry (s) (21063426)

5.30 Bullseye. Darts and general knowledge quiz game (s) (616)

6.00 Animal Country. Dinosaur, David and Sarah Kennedy visit Peterborough Dog Show (s) (525)

6.30 News with Fiona Armstrong. Weather (822703) 6.35 LWT News and weather (281074)

6.40 Appeal by Richard Whitmore on behalf of St Elizabeth's, a national centre for epilepsy sufferers, based in Much Hadham, Hertfordshire (475571)

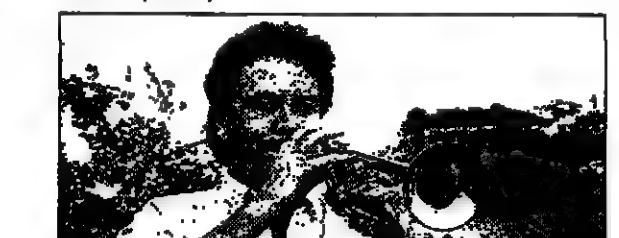
6.45 Highway. Sir Harry Scobee visits the Isle of Wight. (Oracle) (781884)

7.15 You've Been Framed! Jeremy Beadle with another selection of home movie disasters (78787)

7.45 Aspects of the Past. One, Two, Buckle My Shoe. The last of three stylish feature-length mysteries featuring David Suchet as the inflexible Belgian detective. Poirot sets himself for a vast to the dentist to pursue an appointment book which may hold the key to a series of deaths. With Philip Jackson as the plodding Japp (Oracle) (78190)

8.45 It's Be A Bright Light at Night. Denis Norden presents some "real" out-takes (r) (90818)

10.30 News with Fiona Armstrong. Weather (881703) 10.45 LWT Weather (487600)



Man with the golden trumpet: Håkan Hardenberger (10.50pm)

10.50 The South Bank Show: Håkan Hardenberger.

CHOICE: When someone knows all the age of eight exactly what he wants to do with his life, and has the talent and opportunity to fulfil his ambition, there is not much for a television documentary to do except sit back and admire. Hardenberger's career might be more interesting if there had been a few setbacks along the way. But from the time his father gave him a secondhand trumpet as a Christmas present, progress has been uninterrupted. Hardenberger's only difficulty as a solo trumpeter has been a lack of reporters. Even that has now been put right with modern composers such as Siriwelle and Pierre writing trumpet pieces for him. Like all musical virtuosi, Hardenberger has become a globe-trotter. Ken Howard's film catches up with him in his native Sweden, in a church in Denmark, at a festival in Italy and playing with the Grinethorpe Colliery band in Yorkshire. (s) (951836)

11.50 Film: Spectre (1977) starring Robert Culp and John Hurt. Tongue-in-cheek horror story about an American criminologist in England trying to solve a supernatural mystery. Directed by Clive Donner (754155)

1.35 Cue the Music. Billy Ocean in concert at London's Hammersmith Odeon (s) (216074) 2.45 The ITV Chart Show (r) (s) (982001)

3.40 Pick of the Week. The best from the regions (2281399)

4.00 Night Heat. Police drama series (328407)

5.00 Soap. Another comic chapter from the chaotic lives of the Tate and Campbell families (r) (55514)

5.30 ITV Morning News (25539). Ends at 6.00

6.00 Trans World Sport (r) (63109) 7.00 Eureka's Castle. For the under-fives (16516) 7.30 Star Street (170722) 7.55 The Wild Bunch (7072513) 8.25 Ramona (r) (7913451) 8.55 Little Rascals! A new animated series (s) (6057432)

9.25 The Sword of Tipu Sultan. Indian period drama serial. English subtitles (9173161)

10.00 Disasters. A report on how artificially created animals and plants are becoming the property of the companies that develop them (r) (315516)

10.50 Dennis. Adventures of a mischievous boy and his friends (8221161) 11.10 Round the Bend. Puppets and cartoons (r) (s) (402093)

11.30 Dramas: Look at Me. The story of the relationship between two boys, one of whom is deaf (r) (Teletext) (2432)

12.00 Little House on the Prairie. Extracts from the lives of a Kansas plains family during the 1880s (r) (74557) 1.00 Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea. Classic underwater adventure series (50597)

2.00 Film: Appointment in London (1953, b/w). A tribute to the second world war Bomber Command, with Dirk Bogarde as a wing commander showing the strain of almost 50 bombing raids. Routine British war film, directed by Philip Leacock (124513)

3.45 Paradise Lost? A *Survival* documentary examining the effect of tourism on the wildlife of the Hawaiian Islands (r) (950548)

4.15 A Unicorn in the Garden. Animated version of the James Thurber story (171893)

4.25 Vetted Opinion. In the second of his series on antique Max Robertson deals with porcelain and how to spot fakes (4732432)

4.55 News and weather (662364)

5.00 Scottish Eye: Plagues of the Glen. A report on the growing dispute between conservationists and landowners over the future of the Glen of the Great O'Connell (846)

5.30 Dig. Gardening programme presented by Carolyn Marshall (r) (Teletext) (528)

6.00 Teenage Health Freak. Adrian Mole-type comedy tracing the adolescent anguish of schoolboy Peter Payne. Starring Alex Langdon (r). (Teletext) (971)

6.30 The Wonder Years. American version of the previous programme, but set in the late 1960s. Starring Fred Savage (s) (451)

7.00 Defenders of the Wild. The second of three programmes celebrating the achievements of people who have dedicated their lives to protecting the endangered wilderness. Today's subject is 25-year-old Anna Giordano, whose special interest is Italy's threatened honey buzzards. (Teletext) (5258)



Olympic winner sporting a gold medal for sculpture (6.00pm)

6.00 Visions of Sport.

CHOICE: An ambitious feature-length documentary looks at its theme the links between sport and art. The scope is wide, covering more or less the whole of human history. Probably the earliest example of sporting art is in cave drawings made 10,000 years ago. More recently, Homer can claim to be the first great sportswriter. The film is often more about sport and society and the way art has reflected this than about art as such. There is much emphasis on the Olympic movement, both ancient and modern. Here there is direct connection between sport and art. Between 1912 and 1948 arts competitions were held alongside the sporting contests. Medals were awarded for painting, sculpture, architecture, music and literature. Elsewhere the film strains to justify its remit, pulling in Toulouse-Lautrec and Picasso on the strength of their undeniable but hardly central interest in cycling. (45529)

6.30 The Thing is... Money. Paul Morley explores aspects of the world of money with Dennis Taylor, Viscount Weymouth and Tony Lamman, a former associate of the Kray twins (r) (78088)

10.00 Film: Accident (1967) starring Dirk Bogarde, Stanley Baker and Vivien Merchant. Four years after *The Servant*, screenwriter Harold Pinter and director Joseph Losey collaborate again in the unsettling, sharply observed drama about a married Oxford don who suffers emotional turmoil when he falls in love with a pretty undergraduate (2819)

12.00 Film: Yellow Earth (1984). An award-winning examination of life and political attitudes in a remote Chinese village during the Sino-Japanese war in 1939. Directed by Chen Kaige. (177469). Ends at 1.40

TV VARIATIONS

ANGLIA

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● ACCOUNTANCY RESULTS 31-33
● SPORT 33-38

SATURDAY JANUARY 18 1992

BUSINESS EDITOR JOHN BELL

MONEY

Profile

Ernest Saunders came out of Ford Open Prison six months ago after serving nine months for his part in the Guinness affair. He appears to be neither bitter nor a quivering wreck, but the experience has left him determined to be a part proprietor, rather than an employee making money for other people. Page 19



Quiet weddings

Mortgage lenders are footing tax bills for couples who do not tell the tax man when they marry and who continue to receive mortgage interest tax relief they are not entitled to. Page 25

Evasive action

Employees with company cars are making sure they clock up enough mileage to avoid extra tax. Those with less than 2,501 business miles could face a bill of £1,780. Page 25



The Pension Salesman
Ged
Letters Page 26

Friendly warning

Rosalind Gilmore, the chief registrar of friendly societies, gave warning this week that credit unions set up by neighbours, trade unions, colleagues or organisations were often formed without enough planning. Enthusiasm at the launch is not enough, as this can diminish in time, she said. Unions need committed management and a reserve of trained individuals able to step in if necessary, otherwise investments could be put in danger. Page 22



Long wait

The Bank of Credit and Commerce International is to be wound up, but investigations are expected to go on into the next century. Investors question the liquidators' slowness. Page 23

Pep temptation

Single company Peps have been well received but investors should not get carried away and take out more than one in a single tax year. They should check their options. Page 26



Pension plans

Working people could face a 50 per cent rise in national insurance contributions by 2010 if the government bows to pressure to reduce the pension age to 60 for men and women. Page 21

RPI at 4.5% has second monthly gain

Government borrowing rises sharply

By COLIN NARBROUGH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

OFFICIAL figures for December showed inflation rose for the second month running and gave signs of a disturbing deterioration in government finances that could limit the Chancellor's scope for tax cuts in the Budget.

The retail prices index (RPI) rose 0.1 per cent to 135.7 in December, which took the annual increase to 4.5 per cent from 4.3 per cent in November. Last January, it stood at 9 per cent. The acceleration in the annual rate last month was slightly greater than the City expected, but

mainly reflected falls in petrol prices and mortgage rates in 1990 dropping out of the year-on-year comparison.

Price changes in the pipeline, including post-Christmas sales, point to annual inflation holding steady in January, before falling again in February and March, when it is likely to undercut the German rate. Western German inflation rose to an annual 4.1 per cent in December, but is likely to climb near to 5 per cent in this first quarter. German inflation fears are likely to keep Bundesbank policy tight well into this year, making it at

most impossible for Norman Lamont, the Chancellor, to cut rates before the election.

Despite the weakness of economic activity, underlying inflation remains stubbornly high. Excluding mortgage interest rates, the RPI showed an annual rise of 5.8 per cent in December after 5.7 per cent in November. If all housing costs are excluded, annual inflation rose to 7.5 per cent from 7.3 per cent.

Robin Marshall, chief economist at Chase Investment, said his measure of core inflation, excluding food and energy costs, has been at 6.4 per cent for the past three months. "Britain's core inflation remains substantially above core inflation rates in other countries. This indicates there is still substantial progress to be made in reducing British inflation." On the same measure, western Germany has core inflation at 4 per cent.

Simon Briscoe, economist at Midland Montagu, said the pick-up in inflation is the "blip in the dip", as all the evidence pointed to the RPI still being on a downward trend. But he described Treasury figures showing government borrowing of £12 billion in December as "bad in almost every respect", as they showed there was worsening on a broad front. City forecasters had expected the government, helped by £1.8 billion in proceeds from the disposal of BT shares, to make a modest debt repayment. But instead there was a public sector borrowing requirement (PSBR), the first in December since 1987.

After the first nine months of the fiscal year, the cumulative PSBR had reached £10.5 billion, the target Mr Lamont set for the full year. Although January is a month of corporate tax receipts, which produces a large surplus for the government, City economists fear the recession and the rescheduling of payment dates could reduce the repayment by up to £2 billion. Keith Skeoch, chief economist at James Capel, said the "worrisome" outlook for corporate tax receipts meant Mr Lamont was on course to overshoot his PSBR target by up to £2 billion.

John Sheppard, senior economist at Warburg Securities, said the gilt market came off sharply in reaction to the PSBR figures, reflecting fears of possible overspending of government paper in 1992-3. Analysts attributed the rise in the PSBR figure to both a rise in government spending and a fall in revenues.



In buoyant mood: Sir Alistair Frame of Wellcome expects significant growth

Thomas Robinson and BM halted

By JONATHAN PRYNN

SHARES in BM Group and Thomas Robinson Group, the engineers, were halted together yesterday pending announcements on Wednesday.

Neither company would comment on the suspensions but its believed BM Group is poised to make an agreed takeover for the troubled Derbyshire company. Thomas Robinson shares were suspended at 12.5p, valuing the company at £18.75 million.

A takeover would mark the end of the road for another of the generation of mini-conglomerates of the mid-Eighties. Thomas Robinson was the vehicle for Graham Rudd, brother of Nigel Rudd, chairman of the more successful Williams Holdings.

After an initial period of rapid growth, its fortunes never recovered from a disastrous attempted takeover of

John Crowther, the textiles group, in 1988. A subsequent slump in performance resulted in the appointment of Roy Barber, the company doctor, as replacement for the ousted Mr Rudd in July last year.

In October, the company made first-half pre-tax losses of £22.3 million. A slimming operation has left the once sprawling company with interests in wood, process, and specialist engineering and industrial consumables.

Pre-tax profits at BM, a distribution equipment maker, rose almost 50 per cent to £34 million last year. It has been transformed by Roger Shute, chairman, who took over in 1984 when BM was worth £3 million. In September 1990 it bought Blackwood Hodge, the earthmoving plant maker for £58 million. BM was halted at 400p.

Wellcome turnover rises 20%

SIR Alistair Frame, the Wellcome chairman, presented an upbeat report on trading since the August year-end at the annual meeting yesterday, (Jonathan Pryn writes).

In the four months to end-December, group sales rose 20 per cent on the previous year, he said. Margins at the pre-tax level continued to improve, so Wellcome would achieve "a significant enhancement of profits and earnings per share in 1992".

The board came under fire over the pricing of the group's Aids retarding drugs. Rob Archer, of the Wellcome independent shareholders association, urged the company to withdraw the proposed 54 per cent dividend rise, and to cut the Ayclovir price 10 per cent. Wellcome said the chief beneficiary of the payout rise was Wellcome Trust, a charitable group that does considerable Aids research.

IBM suffers its worst year

FROM PHILIP ROBINSON IN NEW YORK

IBM, the world's largest computer company and the bellwether of American industry, reported its first annual loss, and its first sales decline for 45 years. The results were slightly worse than had been expected.

Despite severe job cuts and a fundamental shake-up that began in 1991, analysts doubt whether this year will see an improvement without a global economic upturn.

William Milton, computer analyst with Brown Brothers Harriman, a New York institutional stockbroker and investment bank, said: "This is a critical year for IBM and its fortune will depend on an economic upturn, irrespective of the measures it has already taken."

Last year was one of the toughest experienced by the company since it was founded as a cash register concern in 1914. It lost \$2.8 billion, compared with a \$6 billion profit in 1990. Sales were 6 per cent lower at \$64.8 billion, the first drop since 1946. Costs and expenses rose 10 per cent to \$63.8

billion, leaving an operating profit before tax down 91.5 per cent to \$942 million.

In the final three months of the year, IBM lost \$1.38 post-tax, after charging the \$3.4 billion cost of cutting 29,000 jobs. The bill is \$400 million higher than originally announced because the number of staff who took advantage of a voluntary redundancy plan was half as high again as IBM expected.

John Akers, chairman, said: "We are moving into 1992 a tougher, smarter and more competitive business."

A further 20,000 jobs are expected to be axed this year, cutting the payroll to 300,000, saving IBM \$1 billion this year. As part of its plan to meet competition from smaller rivals, IBM is to split itself into six autonomous divisions and strike more deals with other companies, along the lines of its pact with Apple.

IBM shares, always considered a buy below \$100, have been down to \$83.50 in the past 12 months, but added \$1.25 yesterday to \$96.75.

National Home Loans axes six executives

By NEIL BENNETT, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE problems at National Home Loans, the loss-making mortgage lender, have claimed the jobs of six senior executives only a week after John Darby, the chairman, announced his resignation.

The company said that Christopher Slav, an executive director in charge of leasing and consumer and business loans, has been made redundant, along with five other divisional chiefs,

with immediate effect. The redundancies will save the group an estimated £500,000 a year as the executives will be replaced internally. Since last summer, NHL has reduced its workforce by 150 to 750, and it does not rule out further cuts. The group is still seeking a replacement for Mr Darby and plans a refinancing and restructuring.

Miras bliss, page 25

US trade deficit at nine-year low

By OUR ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE American trade deficit narrowed sharply in November to its smallest for nearly nine years, as sluggish domestic demand curbed imports and exports climbed to a record level, the latest government figures show.

News of the improvement,

which took Wall Street economists by surprise, points to the deficit for all of 1991 falling below \$100 billion for the first time since 1983; it came only a week after President Bush's return from Tokyo with a controversial agreement to cut the \$41 billion deficit with Japan.

Commerce department figures showed the American trade gap at \$3.57 billion in November, a drop of 43.5 per cent from the revised deficit for October. Helped by the lower dollar, and aircraft sales, exports rose 0.9 per cent to \$37.5 billion, exceeding the record set in October. But the main swing was in imports, which fell 5.3 per cent to \$41 billion, with car imports from Japan and Canada both lower. After the first 11 months of 1991, the trade deficit was running at an annual rate of under \$65 billion, against the previous year's total of just over \$100 billion.

The better trade figures conveyed a mixed message on the economy. Record exports could prevent it from starting to shrink again in the final quarter, while the reining back of imports points to the domestic economy still struggling to recover. But recovery in America and slowdown in key export markets may widen the trade gap again.

Other American data confirmed continued weakness. Industrial production fell 0.2 per cent in December, the third consecutive monthly fall, making 1.9 per cent for whole of 1991. This was the first annual fall since 1982.

Bush programme, page 9
Leading article, page 11

THE POUND

US dollar 1.787 (+0.0282)
German mark 2.8509 (+0.0002)
Exchange index 90.4 (+0.4)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKETS

FT 30 share 1966.8 (+8.5)
FT-SE 100 2536.7 (+4.9)
New York Dow Jones 3255.14 (+5.58)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 21321.37 (-250.82)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 10 1/4%
3-month Interbank 10 1/4%
3-month eligible bills 10 1/4%
US Prime Rate 6 1/4%
Federal Funds 5 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills 7 3/4%
30-year bonds 10 1/4%
10-year 10 1/4%

CURRENCIES

London: £1 787.00
New York: \$1 777.00
C. DM 2.8509
C. DM 1.6070
C. Sfr 2.5576
C. Sfr 1.4218
C. FF 7.338
C. FF 4.7507
C. Yen 226.58
C. Yen 127.45
C. Index 90.4
C. Index 52.7
ECU 11.4486
SDR 10.78747
C. ECU 1.38584
C. SDR 1.267833
London foreign market close

GOLD

London Fixing:
AM \$357.30 pm \$355.90
close \$356.00-356.50 (1989 50-200.00)
New York:
Comex \$356.35-356.65

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Feb) \$18.40 bid (\$18.20)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI 126.7 December (1987=100)
Dances midway trading price

Saunders backs Maxwells' silence

By CAROL LEONARD

THE insistence by Ian and Kevin Maxwell on their right to silence - described by George Carman, QC, as a "constitutional right" - and their refusal to answer verbally the questions of a House of Commons select committee, has won support from an unexpected quarter.

Ernest Saunders, a former chief executive of Guinness, whose right to silence was overruled by trade and industry department inspectors and the Serious Fraud Office, says: "They [the Maxwells] are obviously being well-protected by their lawyers and I do not blame them for doing it."

Transcripts of Mr Saunders' conversations with the trade department and the fraud office were submitted

as evidence against him. "The right to silence must be clarified and not left to ad-hoc pronouncements determined by the degree of publicity surrounding a particular case, or the availability of funds," he says.

The claim to a right to silence forms, in part, the grounds for Mr Saunders' application to the European Court of Human Rights to have his conviction quashed. Mr Saunders believes this was a factor that prejudiced his case, making a fair trial impossible. "I was guilty until proved innocent," he says.

Other contributory factors were, he claims, the manner in which Guinness sacked him from his £240,000 a year job and the huge level of publicity surrounding the case. Mr Saunders has been in corres-

pondence with the newly created Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, to discover if its remit encompasses white-collar crime.

Yesterday, Mr Saunders received a reply from Professor Michael Zander, a member of the justice commission, confirming it would examine white-collar crime and "urging" him to submit his views.

Mr Saunders, who is 56, wants the continuing debate on corporate governance to include not only the role of non-executive directors, but also the role, responsibilities and risks of executive directors. "This is an important subject, which ought to concern anybody who is an executive director," he says.

"Today, anyone involved in corporate management faces increasing

personal responsibility for all sorts of activities, and that's fair enough, but they ought to make sure that their own rights are taken care of. There can be instances when a director finds himself estranged from the board, implicated perhaps in a regulatory enquiry, civil litigation or even a criminal trial.

"They will need professional representation and they may find that no one is willing to indemnify them. They will then be personally liable and that is a very worrying situation. Taken to its extreme, who is going to want to be a director of a company? If I was a director, I certainly wouldn't take on the job without an insurance policy."

Profile, page 19

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Peel leaps sixfold to £1.6m

PROFITS at Peel Holdings, the property company run by John Whitaker, were £1.6m (£269,000), helped by a maiden contribution from Manchester Ship Canal.

Peel acquired its 68 per cent MSC stake last May when it bid £80 million for Largs, a private company owned by Mr Whitaker.

The dividend is maintained at 1p.

Trust advances

Net asset value of St Andrew Trust, a smaller companies investment trust managed by Martin Currie, increased 10.7 per cent to 226.1p (204.2p) per share in 1991. Pre-tax revenue was £3.43 million (£3.53 million). Earnings per share were 7.12p (7.36p), and the final dividend is 4.85p (4.70p), making 7.55p (7.20p).

Aberforth up

Net asset value of Aberforth Smaller Companies Trust had advanced 30.5 per cent to 126.2p per share at the end of December. Pre-tax revenue was £1.06 million. Earnings per share are 5.27p. A final dividend of 2.5p is being recommended, giving 4.5p.

Vetting vetoed

THE Office of Water Services is to give up vetting individual property sales under £500,000 by water companies when they are made to independent third parties.

Kunick cuts final dividend against its own forecast

BY GILLIAN BOWDITCH

KUNICK, the amusement machine and nursing homes group, has cut its final dividend by 57 per cent to 0.6p. Last May, when the company launched a £17.6 million rights issue, it said that, barring unforeseen circumstances, it expected a final payout of 1.2p.

The shares fell 1p to 14p yesterday, 19p below the rights issue price. Kunick said that since the issue, its UK amusement machine business, in particular, had continued to suffer from the decline in consumer spending. There was no sign of recovery. The total dividend is 1.4p, down 30 per cent.

Pre-tax profits for the year to end-September fell from £17.5 million to £12.4 million, in line with a warning given by the company in October. Turnover rose from £108 million to £116 million and operating profit fell from £19.3 million to £16.1 million. A rise in net interest payable, from £1.82 million to £3.76 million, explains the lower pre-tax figure. Fully diluted earnings per share fell from 4.93p to 3.1p.

The care services division, which includes Goldsborough nursing homes, increased profits by 86 per cent on turnover up 42 per cent.



It only hurts when we laugh: Russell Smith and Graham Smith, chief executive

The group says growth has been held back by the weak housing market, which has depressed sales of retirement housing units.

The leisure division saw sales grow by 3 per cent but

profits declined by 28 per cent. The amusement machine division was severely affected by the slump in public house trade since Easter. The group says the division's costs have been reduced and the

number of non-public house customers is growing. The visitor attractions division, which includes the London Dungeon, was badly affected by the fall-off in tourism and the full launch of the Musée

du Rock, in Paris, was postponed until Christmas. Amiro, the French amusement machine distributor, had a difficult year. Kunick is reinforcing its position in the French market by increasing the number of distributors it represents.

The gearing ratio has fallen from 73 per cent before the rights issue to 50 per cent. £6 million of the cash raised by the issue has been used for development opportunities, particularly in the care services division.

A number of care home and hospital developments were started in the second half of the financial year. Most of these will be completed during the current year, but will not contribute to profits until next year.

Russell Smith, Kunick's chairman, said: "During the first quarter, trading in the UK pub market has continued to decline and there is no sign of recovery. We believe our business is performing well compared with our major competitors. The group's financial position is secure and we are well placed to take advantage of the recovery when it comes."

Christopher Burnett, formerly chief executive of Silenight Holdings, has been appointed a non-executive director of Kunick.

GrandMet sells 20% Rémy Cointreau stake

BY OUR CITY STAFF

GRAND Metropolitan, the food and drinks group, is selling its 20 per cent stake in Rémy Cointreau, the French drinks company, to Rémy's controlling shareholders. The stake was bought two years ago as a trading investment.

GrandMet has not revealed the cost of the deal but analysts believe the group has broken even. GrandMet is believed to have paid about £100 million in staged payments. The British company had an agreement with Rémy that if it exercised its option to sell at the end of two years it would receive its money back plus a small amount of interest.

George Bull, chairman of International Distillers and Vintners, GrandMet's drinks division, said the stake was acquired as a trade investment aimed at cementing commercial benefits for IDV and Rémy Cointreau. But as both sought to control their own distribution networks, the stake no longer served a useful purpose.

GrandMet recently decided to buy the remaining stake in Cinzano, the Italian drinks group. That deal helped to give IDV full management control of its distribution in Spain, Germany, France and Italy.

Rémy et Associés, the parent company of Rémy Cointreau, said the sale had been agreed by both parties after talks about the worldwide distribution strategies of both. The deal will mean Rémy Cointreau will hold 100 per cent of Rémy Martin and 100 per cent of Cointreau.

No price is being disclosed on the deal. GrandMet paid £14.2 million for the business in 1986, but GrandMet and Courage have spent heavily on the brand and distribution.

Michael Reynolds, Courage's director of public affairs, said: "Grosch has come forward with a proposal that we feel we have to take seriously."

Dutch aim to buy Ruddles

BY MARTIN WALLER

RUDDLES brewery, one of the best-known real ale brands in the country, may be changing hands after an offer from Grosch, the Dutch brewer, to Courage, its new owner. Courage acquired the business along with the rest of Grand Metropolitan's brewing interests last April.

Courage said an "interesting proposal" was put to it by Grosch and talks were continuing. But the company is keen to maintain some interest in the two brands, Ruddles and Best, and any deal could also involve the beer being distributed through Courage's network.

Grosch has no British brewing interests and limited distribution ones. The brewery, at Langham, Leicestershire, employs 140 to 150 people and produces 300,000 barrels a year.

No price is being disclosed on the deal. GrandMet paid £14.2 million for the business in 1986, but GrandMet and Courage have spent heavily on the brand and distribution.

Michael Reynolds, Courage's director of public affairs, said: "Grosch has come forward with a proposal that we feel we have to take seriously."

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George Younger, Chairman speaking at the AGM of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group in Edinburgh Thursday 16 January 1992.



The Rt. Hon. George Younger

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- Direct Line is the UK's most successful and fastest growing personal lines insurer, while Royal Scottish Assurance has completed a profitable first year's trading.
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- Inter-Bank On-Line System, IBOS, extended to France.

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The Royal Bank of Scotland Group plc

T/18/1CS

Micrelec receives takeover approach

MICRELEC Group, the cash-rich petrol station equipment company, delivered details of first-half losses along with the news that it has received a takeover approach. The company, which recently sold its Normand/CMS subsidiary for £7 million, said it has received an approach from third parties, which may lead to an offer.

David Willis, chief executive, said: "Although the company has a good future, the opportunities that exist in the market-place could be such that they would be more rapidly addressed as part of a larger group." Micrelec made a pre-tax loss of £442,000 in the six months to end-September (£1.11 million profit). The loss per share was 2.5p (5.51p earnings), but the interim dividend is held at 1.35p.

Berry closes factory

BERRY Magicoal, the electric heater manufacturer that is owned by Unidare, the Irish group, is closing its Hkston factory in Derbyshire with the loss of 190 jobs. Unidare is switching production to Portadown, Northern Ireland, where it makes a similar range of domestic electrical heating appliances, and blames difficult market conditions. David Rutledge, Unidare's chief executive, said the business had lost more than £1 million a year and the factory was no longer viable. The switch in production might result in more jobs being created at the Northern Ireland plant, but this would require evidence of an upturn in the market, he said.

Eurocopy postpones

EUROCOPY, the office equipment supplier under investigation by the Office of Fair Trading, has postponed its full-year figures for the second time. The company is waiting for the result of the enquiry into whether it should retain all-important consumer credit licences. The company was due to report next Tuesday; analysts expect pre-tax profits of almost £7.5 million against £11.3 million last time. The figures were first due on December 17. Eurocopy believes a decision is imminent; it says the results will be announced within seven days of publication of the OFT's findings, to avoid further uncertainty for shareholders.

Freeman division sold

FREEMAN Group, the insulation materials company quoted on the Unlisted Securities Market, has sold its loss-making contracting division to a management team. In the six months to end-June, the division made a loss of £880,000, pushing the group as a whole into the red. The losses continued in the second half, the company said. The contracting division's net assets are estimated at £350,000. The four-man management buyout team will repay £2.8 million of debts owed by the contracting division to Freeman Group. There is an initial payment of £571,000 and the balance will be paid this year.

LPA earnings halved

PRE-TAX profits at LPA Industries, the USM-quoted industrial electrical accessories group, almost halved, from £904,000 to £476,000, in the year to end-September, on turnover down 8.1 per cent at £6.49 million. The company blamed the downturn on the UK recession. Exports increased by 30 per cent to £801,000, boosted by a large order from the Far East. Earnings slid from 6.69p to 3.69p per share. The final dividend is maintained at 1.87p, making an unchanged total of 3.52p for the year. LPA said a recovery was unlikely to be felt until 1993, even if a turn in the economy was imminent. The shares lost 4p to 51p.

BUSINESS PROFILE: Ernest Saunders

Still sharp ... and staging a comeback

Carol Leonard considers whether the former Guinness chief is a master manipulator or misunderstood genius

Ernest Saunders, aged 56, the former chief executive of Guinness, found guilty on 24 counts of theft, false accounting and breaches of the Companies Act by a jury at Southwark Crown Court, and sentenced to five years' imprisonment — later reduced by the Court of Appeal to two and a half years — is neither a quivering wreck, nor unduly bitter about his ordeal, and his memory is probably better than yours or mine.

Saunders was released from Ford Open Prison in June last year, having served nine months. He has spent the past six months on what he refers to as a "sabbatical" and is now "feeling much better" and ready to complete his rehabilitation by finding a job.

However, Saunders, who saved Guinness from what is widely accepted to have been terminal decline, increasing its capitalisation from £90 million in 1981 to £4 billion in 1987,

when he was unceremoniously sacked, says he will never again be an employee. "I want to be a part proprietor, not just a manager. I spent so many years making, quite frankly, a great deal of money for other people, that I

want to do it for myself this time. I don't know how it is going to be, I don't know what my old self is any more because I have been in this phase for five years now." He received "a handful" of job offers within days of returning to his home in Putney, south-west London, from Ford, but says he was not then well enough to give them serious consideration.

Medical opinion, he says, is still divided on whether he has a degenerative brain condition — the reason for his early release from Ford — or whether the neurological changes detected were brought about by the "cocktail" of tranquillisers and sleeping tablets he had been prescribed for the previous five years. The sleeping tablet he used has since been

withdrawn from the market. "There is no doubt that there were some side effects but I needed them to help me survive. I came off all pills in June and if you do come off suddenly like that, after that period of time, it can make you quite nervous. That's why I needed a bit of a break," he says.

While Saunders renews his job offers and carries out "market research" for a number of other projects under consideration, his friends will readily tell him, even now, that he is definitely not his old self. The experiences of the past five years have changed him and, they say, for the better.

Peter Phillips, a friend of 20 years, says: "He has always been razor sharp and he is still razor sharp. He is different in that he is poorer — he used to arrive for lunch with a chauffeur, now he comes by tube — and he is much humbler. There was a time when I had to make an appointment to see him and even then he was permanently preoccupied. If you went to a dinner party, at his house you never knew if he was going to join you, even if he was at home, because he might be on the telephone or working on numbers. Now, he is much easier to talk to

and he is much more interested in what you have to say." Anyone who encountered Saunders in his heyday will use the same words to describe him. I tell him that people say he was difficult, arrogant and manipulative. He is obviously taken aback. That he was a workaholic, ambitious and a bit of a bore. "In business I have usually achieved my goals. I do think very deeply and often appear preoccupied, but I'm far more sensitive than people think. I get hurt easily but I cover it up."

Saunders prides himself on being supportive of anything British. Like most immigrants — he arrived in Britain in 1938, aged two and a half, a refugee from Hitler's Germany — he is more loyal

than the natives. He constantly mentions public schools, both his own, St Paul's, and his children's. He talks about Cambridge tutorials. He watches Wimbledon and the test series on television. Lectures at business schools, and is adamant that he is not Jewish, even though both his parents were of Jewish origin. "I'm a supporter of the Church of England," he says. He will move to the continent to seek work if he has to — he is fluent in French and German — but he would prefer to remain in Britain.

"If there is anything positive from the past five years it is that the family has become extremely close. It is the desire to keep hold of that which has precluded me from getting on a plane to seek pastures new. The children have not only salvaged the family unity, but they have put down roots here." The Saunders family was not always so close.

Phillips also comments on the loyalty of Saunders' three children. Jo, aged 26, Jamie, 25 and John, 19. Jamie wrote the book *Nightmare: The Ernest Saunders Story*, which helped ease out the family's finances for 18 months. "The kids have been unbelievable," Phillips says, "especially when you bear in mind that when all this happened they didn't really know him that well."

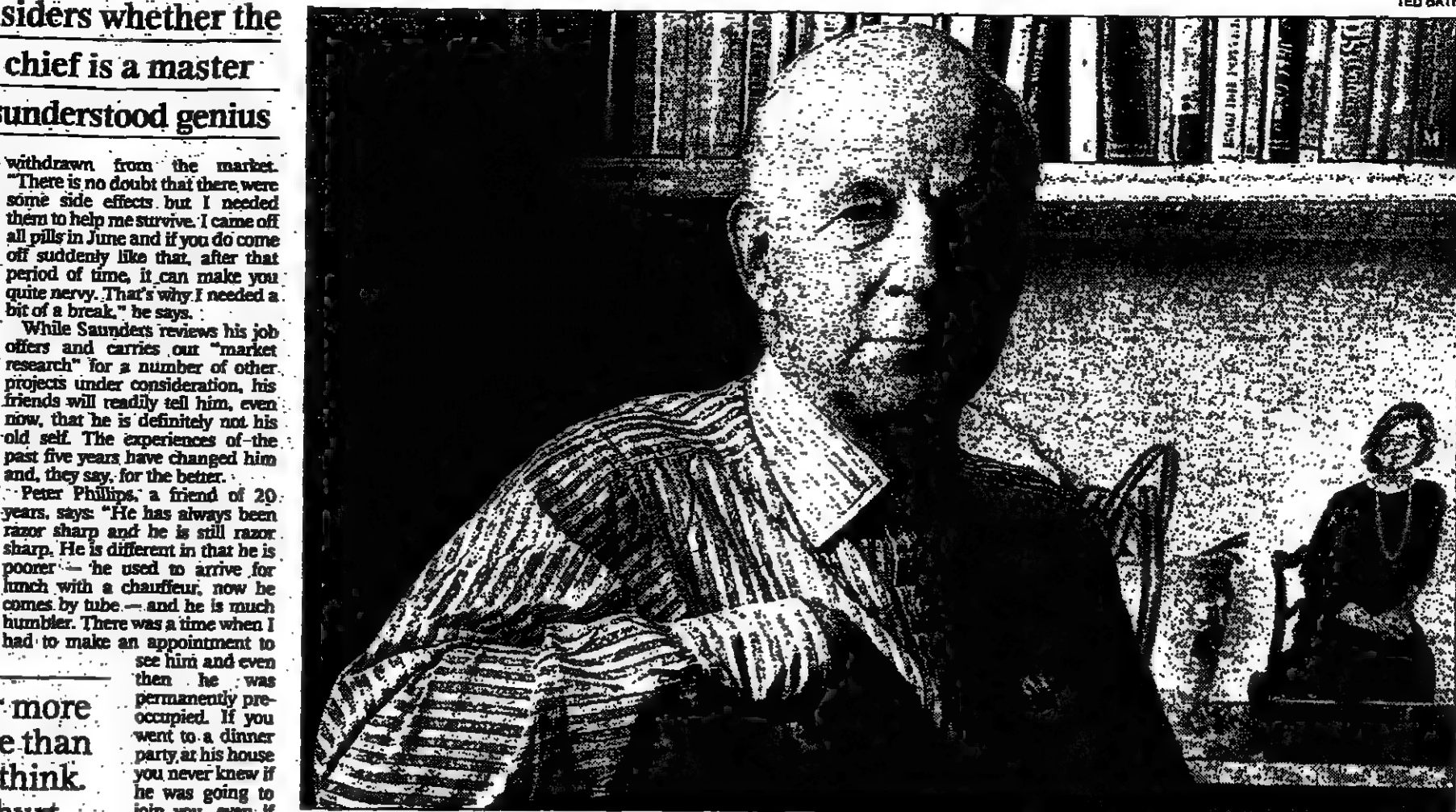
The money from the book has run out. Saunders has been signing on the dole once a fortnight but says that will now stop. Of the £700,000 raised from the sale of the family home in Putney, Buckinghamshire, in 1987, half went to Carol, his wife, from whom he is still legally separated, a quarter went to buy the terrace house in Putney for Jo and Jamie and the rest was spent on legal fees. "I have no money whatsoever," Saunders says. His defence, which cost him £400,000, could

have cost more than £3 million if he had used silks of a calibre to match the prosecution. He admits that the only time he does feel bitter is when he drives past the Guinness headquarters. "I've had hundreds of letters from Guinness shareholders thanking me for all that I did for the company, wishing me well and saying they assume that the Guinness family has helped out. They have not."

Poverty is always a relative term. The Putney house might be in the name of two of his children, but it was bought with his money and there is no mortgage. He carries a mobile telephone everywhere. He must be one of the few regulars at Putney DSS office with such a device.

In the light of the millions he made for the Guinness family — the company is now capitalised at more than £10 billion — he does, however, have a point. Saunders' share options alone would now be worth £11 million. The shock of the trade and industry department enquiry at Guinness in December 1986 — Saunders calls this his darkest hour — was followed by a four year wait for the trial. The stress has taken its toll. He likens it to an avalanche "coming my way and then overwhelming me".

He is uncertain about whether he suffered a mental breakdown. "Let's just say I was severely mentally shocked." He can recall lying in bed at night shaking uncontrollably "because I was so scared". While staying with friends one weekend, he failed to appear for dinner and they found him semi-conscious in the bath. "I was completely exhausted and had gone to have a bath because I felt so cold. They found me lying there in some sort of trance, shivering. The water had gone cold. I suppose it was fear — fear and fatigue." He describes Ford as a cross between boarding school



On the road to recovery: Ernest Saunders, at home in Putney, sees finding a job as the final step in his rehabilitation

and national service "but that is not something you expect to be doing when you are 50". One noticeable difference from either boarding school or the army was the cheer that would go up among inmates when interest rates were increased. "They would gleefully shout things like 'That's another £600,000'," Saunders says.

Carol, who lives in Switzerland, suffered two breakdowns. She is now much, but not fully, recovered. She visited Saunders at Ford and has been back to Britain several times since June. He is hopeful that if he can buy her a home here they will be reconciled.

Saunders admits he made some mistakes. "I was so focused on the business, the Herculean task to be achieved, that I am now only too willing to believe that I did not spend enough time on the niceties of life. I am the sort of person who always thought that the results should speak for themselves. It is quite possible people found me tough or cold. I was a machine."

Here Saunders has it. He was neither a ladies' man nor a man's man, he was the ultimate company man. Company men are not popular. When it came down to basic human relationships, Saunders was dispensable. If his theory that he was unfairly used as a scapegoat is correct, this could explain why.

I try to warn to him but it is difficult. If he has any overt personal appeal it is akin to that of an awkward adolescent. In conversation, if there is a choice between a serious or a more humorous route, he will unfailingly opt for the former. He smiles readily but is not a man given to belly laughs. I begin to conclude that it is this unfortunate manner that may have led to so many fateful misunderstandings. Or have I been duped by the master manipulator? No, I believe I have not. He offers to answer any question I pose. As he takes centre stage, it becomes apparent that it is the absence of natural social grace that makes any attempt at persuasion seem like crass manipulation. A more naturally charming person would attain the same objective with ease. The marketing genius has one flaw. Saunders, when you accept him for what he is, is astonishingly open, surprisingly honest and, mental aberrations aside, is so serious about every aspect of life that it is difficult to imagine him ever having been anything else.

WEEK ENDING Matthew Bond

Are you now, or have you ever been...?

As the television camera closed in, there was no mistaking the very real distress being experienced by the victim. The prospect of being grilled by a House of Commons select committee was clearly bad enough, but the knowledge that the camera's zoom lens would mercilessly expose every bead of sweat and nervous tic to an audience of a million armchair judges, was almost too much to bear.

Just as a rabbit sits entranced by the headlights that herald its own imminent demise, so the victim was unable to wrest his eyes away from the camera that he knew could result in the same fate, albeit less messily.

Against the background babble that preceded the first question, the victim sat in silent thought, reflecting for the umpteenth time on the extraordinary circumstances that had brought him here. The deliberate clearing of a throat jolted him out of his introspection.

"Please state your name and your position," boomed the committee's chairman, an experienced backbencher relishing this unexpected elevation in his public profile.

There was a long pause, as the victim's frightened gaze was torn away from the camera only to fix anew on his own hands, lying tightly clasped on the desk in front of him. The first attempt at a response was muffled.

"Speak up please," barked the chairman, before breaking into his best eye-of-frog smile. "And relax sit, this is a parliamentary enquiry into a matter of great public interest, not a criminal trial. Now, your name and position, please."

With an anguished final glance to left and right, the victim summoned a huge breath. "My name is Peter Birch and I am chief executive of the Abbey National."

An audible sigh of release washed round the crowded committee room. He'd got one right, at least. The chairman cleared his throat. "Now, Sir Peter... I beg your pardon, Mr Birch. I



am right in believing that it was your building society — I mean bank — that cut its mortgage rate by half a percentage point this week?

"This cut came despite there being no preceding cut in bank base rate and I believe came as a considerable surprise to City economists. Now we must put it to you that this totally unwarranted rate cut was in fact the most blatant piece of deception on your part. What do you have to say to that?"

Again, there was a long and agonising pause. At least they had not asked him about progress on the scheme to relieve the repossession crisis. Mr Birch thought gratefully. Sensing the kill, an unseen director ordered the cameras in tight. Mr Birch spoke slowly but clearly. "I will answer only through my counsel."

The packed committee room gasped as one. Here was drama. The chairman smiled a rather different smile and pressed on. "Mr Birch. I must emphasise that this is a matter of the utmost importance to millions of home owners, who are very concerned that if mortgage rates can come down arbitrarily this side of an election, then equally they can go up arbitrarily on the other. Is that not so, Mr Birch?"

"I will answer only through my counsel," intoned Mr Birch. At that moment an

extremely well-dressed and prosperous looking individual slid into a vacant chair. "If I might address the committee," he began elegantly. "I act for Mr Birch and I must humbly warn the committee that it is pursuing a sterile route. My client will respond in similar vein, no matter how elegant your questions. If, however, you would like to address your questions to me, I will do my best to answer them."

"There will be a brief recess," announced the chairman, summoning the committee into an emergency huddle. On the other side of the desk, Mr Birch visibly relaxed. A quiet chuckle was even allowed to emerge, as he filled the brief, idle moments by reading the latest results from the TSB Group.

Noisier chuckles came from his counsel, who shook his head in amusement as he skimmed through David Rowland's proposals to reform the Lloyd's insurance market. "Splendid," he thought, "now the only real unlimited liability will be a client's legal fees," and made a mental note to double his underwriting capacity once he had been paid for that little bit of insolvency work.

The huddle broke up and the committee members resumed their seats. "We have considered your argument, but find it has no merit. So we must ask Mr Birch once again. Your cut means mortgages are now at their lowest since 1988, a period now widely regarded as the birthplace of our economic ills. Is it really wise to tread that path again? In short, Mr Birch, your cut is simply a device to aid the Conservative chances in the general election?"

Mr Birch again looked unhappy but remained silent. Not so his counsel, who fixed the committee with his most condescending of courtroom glares. "Chairman, committee members. In my judgment I say only two things. One that a general election is likely and two, that it is likely soon." How true.

Germany to tighten financial regulation

BY WOLFGANG MÜNCHAU
EUROPEAN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

GERMANY'S attempts to improve its position as a leading financial centre have always created more interest abroad than at home. Such was the fate of the latest legislative proposal by Theo Waigel, the finance minister.

Herr Waigel's proposals, unveiled this week, are the latest of a number of moves to eradicate some of the idiosyncrasies of Germany's sometimes outdated financial system. The singularly most important aspect of the Waigel package is the envisaged creation of a powerful federal regulatory authority, on the lines of America's Securities and Exchange Commission.

Such an authority is long overdue. Until a year ago, German bankers and brokers decided the idea of statutory regulation, defending the self-regulatory system, under which insider dealing is discouraged but not illegal.

But a series of embarrassing insider dealing scandals last year severely dented the image of Germany's banks abroad, and persuaded even the die-hard self-regulators of the virtues of statutory control. The law will go to parliament in the second half of the year, just in time for the single European market in 1993.

Preservation of Germany's reputation aside, such a law would have been needed under European Community harmonisation.

Britain and America went through the same processes several years ago, so Herr Waigel's initiative means no more than that Germany is catching up with the rest of the world. Investors will welcome the growing maturity of the German financial scene, but it must be doubtful whether Frankfurt will ever have a realistic chance of challenging London as Europe's main financial centre. The gap is far too big. The odd thing is that in London some fear it might happen, while in Frankfurt hardly anybody nurtures such hopes, even in their wildest dreams.

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Choosing the fixed-rate option

The half per cent cut in mortgage rates announced this week is good news. It is the seventh cut in 16 months, but the new base rate of just below 11 per cent still falls short of many of the fixed-rate mortgages on offer.

Fixed-rate loans offering certainty over the next three, five or ten years must be considered by anyone thinking of buying a property. The Abbey National, which led the way down with its surprise cut in its base mortgage rate to 10.99 per cent has a fixed-rate mortgage available at 10.55 per cent until 1995.

Those expecting rates to keep falling back to the levels of the summer of 1988 must also remember how most homebuyers only benefited from rates below 10 per cent for three months before they began climbing again.

There are, of course, cheaper rates for larger loans and first-time buyers, which, when added to the current variable rates, take them below the fixed-rate offers. However, the majority of the Abbey's borrowers have loans

below the £60,000 threshold for cheaper loans.

Even first-time buyers might weigh the advantage of a loan 1.5 per cent below the usual variable rate until January next year — possibly only nine months of cheaper payments for someone who has just found a property he or she wants to buy — and the certainty that payments will not rise over the first few years of the loan.

For those who want it both ways, capped-rate mortgages are the answer. These are available as low as 9.95 per cent over one year. Longer-term certainty that the payments cannot rise above the capped level although they can fall below it is more expensive. This shows that the money markets do not expect low rates to last over the next few years.

The real winners in the property game were those who took out



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

fixed rate loans below 10 per cent over five years in 1987. They can now look at the fixed rates on offer, probably from the same lender, and take advantage of them.

There are penalties for early redemption but the last few years have shown that property owning is a long-term commitment and not a quick way of making tax-free gains.

The real losers in the interest rates merry-go-round are savers. Once again, they face a cut in their rates and, because they know that building societies have few

people to lend to at the moment, they must fear these reductions may more than reflect the mortgage rate cuts.

The new savers' rates are not likely to be announced for a few weeks, but they could be implemented a few days earlier than the mortgage rate cut for existing borrowers on March 1. It would not be the first time that savers have paid for the largesse of lenders.

There are at least six savers for each borrower. Fixed rates, if they are available, are more of a gamble at the moment. Only

National Savings' guaranteed returns seem attractive and that is largely because anyone putting £10,000 in the 36th issue pays no income tax on it.

Ill wind

Total financial disasters — especially well publicised ones — provide wonderful sales aids for investment advisers. Barely had the pension trustees at Mirror Group Newspapers announced that there was insufficient money in the fund to guarantee the pensions already being paid, let alone anything else, than pension salesmen started saying now was the time for those worried about their company pension scheme to save with them.

They neglected to point out that the only part of the pension money to be totally safe over at Mirror

Group was the additional voluntary contributions paid by employees to boost their retirement income.

These can only be used for the individuals concerned and are in no danger of being used to pay the pensions of others.

Investment groups had thought that freestanding AVCs were next to impossible to sell until this gift was handed to them. The group AVC schemes offered by employers usually have much lower charges because the setting up costs per contributor are much lower.

Big companies can also negotiate on charges, whereas individuals have to accept any fee structure unless they are wealthy.

While pensions law undoubtedly needs tightening up, scaring people out of company schemes into personal pensions is not doing anyone a service — apart from the insurance companies that are busy announcing increased pensions business in the middle of a recession. It's an ill wind...

National insurance payments could double if the state chooses 60 for men and women

Pension age poses dilemma

Sara McConnell focuses on the choices open to government in the continuing debate over equalising retirement ages

WORKING people could face a 50 per cent increase in national insurance contributions by the year 2010 if the government decides to set the state retirement age at 60 and raise state pensions in line with earnings rather than prices. The rise would come on top of income tax.

Mercer Fraser, the actuary, which has calculated these figures, said that to avoid any rise in national insurance contributions, the retirement age for both men and women would have to be set at 67. At the moment, men qualify for a state pension at 65, while women start collecting their pensions five years earlier.

Doubts over the future of pensions for employees of the Mirror Group have dominated the news this week, overshadowing the debate about the future of state pension provision. High on the agenda are options for equalising state pension ages.

The government has said it is committed to some form of equalisation, but is faced with the prospect of growing numbers of pensioners making heavy demands on a national insurance fund fuelled by contributions from fewer workers in the first decades of the twenty-first century. Any reduction in the retirement age would mean higher national insurance contributions from the workforce.

Employees now pay 9 per cent of their income above £52 a week, up to £390 a week, in national insurance contributions. Employers pay a further 10.4 per cent but if the retirement age were 60 for everyone, employers would have to pay 16 per cent and employees 14 per cent, Mercer Fraser said. The total national insurance contribution per worker for a lower retirement age and a better uprating would be 30 per cent of gross annual income.

Andrew Collins, research actuary at Mercer Fraser, said that about 18 per cent of national insurance contributions are now going to fund flat-rate and earnings-related pensions. The social security department estimates the national insurance fund will spend £41.7 billion on benefits in the financial year 1992-3, of which £27 billion will fund state pensions. As soon as contributions are

paid into the national insurance fund, they go out again to fund pensions or other benefits. If men could call on the fund five years earlier for their pension, the remaining workforce would have to pay more to compensate. It would also cost the existing workforce more if pensions were increased in line with average earnings rather than prices, as they are now.

The option highlighted by Mercer Fraser would be the most expensive of several being examined by the government. Others include raising the pension age to 65 for women, which would save the state £2.9 billion a year at 1991 prices, or setting it at 63, which would mean a saving of £0.3 billion. Also under consideration is a flexible scheme, allowing people to retire at any time between 60 and 70. The government has been forced to consider the options available in the wake of the Barber judgment in the European Court in May 1990, which ruled that occupational pensions were part of pay and men and women should receive equal benefits.

Companies are starting to equalise pension ages but many are hanging back to see which way the government moves on the question. In a report issued last December, "Options for Equality in State Pension Age", the government calculated that setting a retirement age of 60 for everyone would cost the state £3.4 billion a year at 1991 prices. All the government calculations assume a phasing-in period, starting in 2010. The report gave warning that a pension age of 60 would mean an increase of 2 per cent in combined employee-employer contributions in 2025 and 1.5 per cent more in 2035.

Mercer Fraser pointed out in an update to its clients this week that these figures presupposed that pensions would be uprated in line with prices as they are now but that this could change. If



Labour wins the election, it has pledged to raise pensions in line with earnings or prices, whichever is higher. Uprating in line with earnings would double the cost of pension provision to the state over the next 20 years to £40 billion, assuming a 1.5 per cent growth in real average earnings, whereas the cost of uprating in line with prices would be about £38 billion, the government report said.

The level of state pension age and the cost of pension provision is being debated against a backdrop of growing numbers of pensioners being supported by fewer people of working age. By 2010, there will be only 3.1 people of working age to support each pensioner instead of 3.4 per cent today. If men had the right to their pension at 60, there would only be 2.6 working people per pensioner. There will be about 11.3 million pensioners in 2010 against 10.3 million this year.

The only way to avoid extra national insurance contributions is to raise the retirement age for everyone to at least 65. Mercer Fraser said that by 2010, with no equalisation of retirement ages, employers and employees would face a total tax of 25 per cent of annual salary if pensions were uprated in line with

earnings, and 18 per cent if the uprating was based on prices. If everyone retired at 67, the tax on an earnings basis would be cut to 17, while the payment would be only 12 per cent on a prices basis.

Other pensions experts agree that the combination of a declining workforce and a reduced pension age would be expensive to fund. Roger Key, a partner at R Watson, the actuary, and a member of the pensions committee at the Institute of Actuaries, said: "If the retirement age is 60 and the earnings link is restored, it will have quite an effect."

"It has immediate political repercussions. Restoring the link with earnings will not initially have much effect unless it is backdated but the cost will go up because the number of pensioners is increasing rapidly while the number of workers is not."

The government is torn between the political advantage to be gained from announcing a reduction or increased flexibility in retirement ages and the cost of such a move.

Ron Spill, pensions controller at Legal & General, said: "Full state pensions at 60 linked to earnings would be a big bill and would be approached gradually. But the trend is towards raising retirement ages and I believe the scenario of pensions at 60 is improbable, despite popular support for the option."

The date set for comments on the government's report is June 30, almost sure to be safely after a general election.

'I believe the scenario of pensions at 60 is improbable, despite support for the option'

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Europe battles with costs

BRITAIN is one of only four countries in Europe which do not have the same retirement ages for men and women, but, like its European partners, it is struggling to find ways of reducing the cost of pension provision. Several countries have already made drastic changes by raising retirement ages and increasing contributions (Sara McConnell writes).

Greece, Portugal and Italy still have split retirement ages, according to the latest annual report on pensions in Europe from Noble Lowndes, the actuary. Greece allows women to retire at 60, and men five years later, as in Britain. Italy is at present more generous to all its working population, allowing men to take a pension at 60 and women to retire on a full pension at 55. Portugal lets women retire at 62, men at 65. All other European Community countries have one retirement age,

ranging from 60 in France and Belgium to 67 in Denmark.

Last year, amid much public protest, the Greek government lengthened the minimum time someone had to work to qualify for a state pension and the final average pension is now based on the last five, not the last two, years' salaries.

Both Italy and Portugal are planning to take action on serious difficulties with the funding of their pension provision. Proposals under consideration by the Italian government will raise the pension age to 65 for both sexes by 2016, moving up in increments starting next year, increase contributions and increase the length of working life needed to qualify.

Figures from the British government included in its report, "Options for Equality in State Pension Age", show that 35 per cent of Italy's population will be over 65 by 2040, while the

working population will fall by 15 per cent. Nearly 23 per cent of France's population will be over 65 by 2040, compared with 14 per cent now.

Some of the most draconian measures to ease funding difficulties were adopted by Germany in 1988 and will be progressively implemented from this year. By 2005, German women will have to wait until they are 65 before they can draw a full state pension, an option which is also under active consideration in this country. The German government has also increased contributions but the pain is eased slightly by an increase in the government subsidy.

Spain has also taken steps to lighten the financial burden of pensions on its working population over the last 10 years by freezing its maximum pension, lengthening the period of final average earnings on which the pension level is based, and withdrawing early retirement.

Trusts jump at loophole in Peps rules

BY SARA MCCONNELL

Credit unions are mushrooming but enthusiasm alone is not enough. Lindsay Cook reports the anxieties of the registrar

fully informed and to submit regular financial returns. In the past few months, the registry has prosecuted eight credit unions for not submitting the quarterly and annual returns on time. Seven were convicted and one was given a conditional discharge. The fines were small, totalling £420 with a further £580 in costs. During the year, a total of 13 societies were convicted, the report says.

Mrs Gilmore said in the annual report of the registry of friendly societies, which registers credit unions and monitors their activities, that there was a danger that "the enthusiasm and energy which marks the launch of a credit union is prone to diminish with time. It is imperative that those responsible for promoting credit unions ensure that there is not only committed management in place from the start, but also a reserve of trained individuals who can step in. Management of credit unions is an onerous responsibility — that of ensuring that members' funds are safely stewarded."

An attempt to set up a compensation scheme for savers with credit unions failed during the year to September 1990. The discussions did not get so far as to suggest a percentage of savings that could be safeguarded. Building society savers, for example, are guaranteed 90 per cent of the first £20,000 of savings. There is no protection for credit union

Onerous responsibility: Rosalind Gilmore

66 Scottish unions registered at September 30. There are six credit unions in Wales. Four unions ended the year effectively closed down by directions prohibiting or restricting their activities. They were the Antilles Credit Union, the Enterprise Credit Union, Viewpark Credit Union and ACFE (Nottingham) Credit Union.

bank was hoping to raise "somewhere around £30 million" during the subscription period for its new split capital smaller companies trust. The closing date for subscriptions is February 7.

Scottish Amicable and Lloyds bank have launched new investment trust Peps. Because of a loophole in the Pep regulations, these count as new issues, and investors can put the whole of their £6,000 annual allowance into an investment trust within a Pep as long as this is done within 42 days of issuing.

Scottish Amicable will launch its smaller companies investment trust on January 22. As with Lloyds, investors will be allowed to put £12,000 into a Pep in one go because the investment trust is a new issue. Those who invest before February 27 will be issued one warrant for every five shares. These are redeemable at the opening price of the shares on a later date.

Both companies are offering the option of putting in £12,000 in one go, £6,000 for the 'Pep' year 1991-2, which ends in April, and £6,000 for the following 'Pep' year, 1992-3, to qualify under the 42-day rule. M&G has already written to potential investors in its new recovery investment trust Pep, offering them the opportunity to take out two Peps at the same time if they register before March.

The Exeter Preferred Capital Investment Trust, sponsored by Greig Middleton, the stockbroker, will also allow investors to take advantage of the PEP rules for new issues. It is hoping to raise £60 million in the public offer, open until January 23.

The Fleming Income and Capital investment trust is likely to set itself a target of £550 million from investors. Again, investors can put up to £12,000 into this trust for this PEP year and the next.

John Wright, at Lloyds Investment Managers, said the

NATIONAL Provident Institution (NPI) has cut payouts on ten-year endowment policies maturing after January 1 by 8.8 per cent, while the payout on 15-year endowment policies has fallen 2.8 per cent. The payout on a ten-year policy into which £30 a month has been paid is £6,003, down from £6,581. The payout on a 15-year policy will be £14,406 instead of £14,825. Payouts on 25-year endowments will be £51,999, the same as those set at a review last July.

number of private medical attendance reports doctors need to complete. GRE will issue a range of supplementary medical questionnaires to be completed by policyholders instead of asking the applicant's doctor to fill in the form.

□ Applicants for life assurance policies from Guardian Royal Exchange will find processing times cut as the company is cutting down on the

□ The Scarborough Building Society has launched a mortgage fixed for one year at 9.95 per cent (an annual percentage rate of 11.9 per cent), until March 31, 1993. There is a penalty of three months' interest for redemptions in the first two years but this is waived if a borrower transfers to another scheme with the Scarborough. There is an application fee of £75.

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It is a long wait behind the liquidator

BCCI may be the biggest and most complex corporate failure, but even with quite straightforward businesses creditors often have a long wait for very little. Liz Dolan finds out why.

NEWS this week that the Bank of Credit and Commerce International was to be wound up raises the thorny question of just how much depositors can hope to get back after the liquidators have taken their share of the assets, and how long it will take before the whole business has been completed.

Fees payable for work completed in the UK so far in the BCCI liquidation have already reached £50 million, according to Touche Ross, the provisional liquidator, which at its peak had 330 partners and staff working on the case. The affairs are expected to continue well into the next century.

The Consumers' Association is also worried about the time such cases take, especially where compensation schemes are concerned. Some of the depositors caught up in the BCCI affair face real hardship, even bankruptcy. They are due up to £15,000 compensation from the Depositors' Protection Fund, but will have to wait until at least the end of this month for their money. The bank stopped trading in July.

Jane Vass, the association's research manager, said: "These schemes should be empowered to move more quickly. At the moment everyone has to wait until the company has actually gone into liquidation. We think there should be some way of paying cases of real hardship much earlier." The association is also lobbying to get the ceiling for compensation paid to bank depositors raised from £15,000 to £100,000, and then inflation-linked.

The BCCI affair is unique, according to Touche Ross. It is the largest and most complex corporate failure in history, involving regulatory authorities in 60 countries. The liquidator's best estimate is that only 40p in the pound will ultimately be recovered, and depositors will not see even that amount until 1994.

However, much less complex cases involving purely UK-based companies have taken well over ten years to unwind. Christopher Morris, BCCI's official liquidator, has yet to close the books on a Sumatran rubber company that collapsed in 1949. Ian Bond, president of the Society of Insolvency Practitioners and a partner in Cork Gully, the insolvency firm, is still grappling with problems associated with the collapse of the International Credit Bank of Geneva, which went under in 1976.

Several readers involved in liquidations have asked why such operations cost so much, and take so long. Frank Patton, of Bridgwater in Somerset, received 12.8p in the pound as an unsecured creditor of a firm which went bankrupt in December 1989. The liquidators got 32 per cent of the available assets. He said: "I understood the liquidators were appointed to

protect the interests of creditors."

Another reader, Robert Arguile, lost £261 when Mears Brothers Holdings, a publicly quoted civil engineering firm in which he had shares, went into voluntary liquidation in the late 1970s. He said: "I still get a report every year from the receivers saying 'Don't tear up your certificates, there's still hope.' I cannot comprehend why they have taken so long to sort it all out. They really are the most dilatory people. I'm not bothered for myself. I lost very little money. But what about all those people who lose their life savings when companies collapse?"

Mr Bond said: "The length of time taken depends on a number of factors. I have had some jobs where my fee has been less than 1 per cent of the assets, and creditors got 95p or even 100p in the pound. In others, the reverse has happened." In most cases, it was reasonably simple to agree on who had a claim on the business and to get initial payments under way.

"The real problem comes when assets then have to be realised. For instance, you may have a stretch of land in, say, Oklahoma, with planning problems. Before you can sell it, you have to establish the rights to the property, then you have to find a buyer, pay the appropriate taxes and get the money out of the country before you can even start thinking about dividing up the proceeds."

Costs paid to the liquidators had to be approved by the creditors, he said. "We don't just write out cheques to ourselves. The creditors aren't



Credit line: protest by BCCI staff and depositors

our buddies. They are the ones who have lost the money and they are going to be concerned about what is happening to the remaining assets.

Liquidators are paid according to five criteria: the complexity of the case, the effectiveness with which liquidators carry out their duties, the level of responsibility in-

olved, the value of the assets, and the time taken to unravel the case. Fees paid range from £15-£20 per hour for junior staff to more than £200 per hour for senior partners. The bulk of the work is carried out by people earning £75 per hour.

Mr Bond calculates that payments made to liquidators average 10 per cent of the total of realisable assets.

Only 11,400 of the 32,000 depositors on BCCI's UK books have applied for compensation. The view, both in the City and in Whitehall, is that many of the rest have something to hide and are unlikely ever to reclaim their money. If the same occurs in other countries, the "honest" claimants will get a larger slice of the cake than they could otherwise have hoped for.

People who have shares in companies that go into liquidation come right at the end of the queue when the assets are divided up. They are unlikely to end up with anything at all. If there is any money left over for shareholders it is because the value of the assets is much higher than suspected at the time of liquidation. During a property boom for instance, the liquidators may be able to sell assets for very much more than anyone thought possible.

BES company to take on 150 homes for rental

THE Mortgage Corporation is repossessing some of the houses made on repossessions by selling 150 of the properties on its books to a company backed by a Business Expansion Scheme (Liz Dolan writes).

The properties are a mixture of those that have already been repossessed, and those whose occupiers are currently facing eviction for non-payment. They will then be rented out either to new tenants, or to any existing occupiers able to meet the new rental requirements. Suitable existing occupiers are being informed of the scheme and asked to apply.

Smith & Williamson, the sponsor, is looking to raise up to £15m. Investors pay a minimum of £1,000, and any more in multiples of £500. Under BES rules, standard-rate taxpayers can then claim back 25p per 100p share and higher-rate payers 40p. Investors pay issue costs of 6.75 per cent of the funds raised.

Cavendish Home Investments, the company running the scheme, says it will make a minimum distribution at the end of the five-year term of 137p a share. The properties will be sold back to TMC at the end of the period unless the company decides it can get a higher return by selling them on the open market. For this to happen, house prices will have to have risen by more than 5 per cent in each of the five years.

A similar scheme set up by Johnson Fry recently was rejected by the Inland Revenue because letting agreements

were already in place before the properties had been sold on to the BES company. According to Gareth Pearce of Smith & Williamson, no such problem would occur in this case because TMC was selling the properties on to Smith & Williamson before tenancies were offered to existing mortgagees.

He added that tax certificates would be sent out to investors after the minimum four-month period after the scheme gets underway.

TMC is also preparing to launch two other initiatives aimed at cutting down on the number of repossessions on its books. It is discussing with a number of housing associations a scheme whereby it leases properties to the associations for an initial period of between one and three years. Under the scheme, TMC receives a rental stream, while the housing association would be paid a fee for managing the properties.

A spokesman for TMC said: "We are not looking to simply defer the problems of homeless families. The housing associations will select people whose circumstances are appropriate to this type of letting." The corporation is also planning to launch a service called JobCare, which will advise TMC borrowers who are not yet in arrears with their mortgage, but are worried that they may soon lose their jobs. JobCare will be run in conjunction with TMC's existing MoneyCare debt counselling service for borrowers already in financial difficulties.

Holiday plan offers 'undersold' refunds

BARCLAYS is offering its own version of one London department store's proud promise. "Never knowingly undersold" (Sara McConnell writes).

For the first time, the six-year-old Barclaycard Holiday Club will refund the difference if cardholders buying a holiday through the club find the same trip at a lower price within seven days of booking.

Those who book their holiday by post or by telephone, and pay the deposit and insurance costs by Barclaycard, can claim between £20 and £500 free holiday spending money. The balance of the holiday cost can be paid by cheque, cash or credit card.

Holidays from more than 50 tour operators, including Inghams, Thomsons, P&O

and Brittany Ferries, qualify for the deal. Two adults and a child travelling to Crete this July for 14 nights bed and breakfast with Falcon would get £60 spending money to help with the £960 cost. Two adults taking a 13-day Black Sea cruise on board Cunard's Vistafjord in May in a category A double outside cabin would have to pay £7,860 for the holiday but would get £500 spending money. Cruise bookings form 10 per cent of the holiday club's total bookings, compared with 2 per cent for the market as a whole.

Barclays said that club bookings were up about 20 per cent this year. Long haul holidays are proving most popular, with bookings up 24 per cent. Bookings to Europe are up 11 per cent.

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Illicit love gives way to illicit mortgage relief



Nigel Lawson's Budget change in the Miras rules provoked the housing price boom of 1988

Lenders get Revenue bill for wedded Miras bliss

BY LINDSAY COOK, WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

IN the past, couples did not reveal that they were living together, unwed. Now they are keeping quiet when they get married, and it is costing mortgage lenders millions of pounds.

In the year to April 5, 1991, the Inland Revenue mortgage tax relief unit charged lenders £3.9 million for paying too much tax relief to couples who have married. This year the sum is likely to be larger, said the Inland Revenue. Some building societies have been issued with additional tax bills of around £1 million.

Married couples have always been restricted to one person's mortgage tax relief, but until August 1988 single people could each have tax relief on £30,000 of a loan on the same property. Nigel Lawson's March Budget that year announced that multiple tax relief was to end for mortgages taken out after August 1. A scramble followed, with thousands of people determined to buy properties with double tax relief, pushing up house prices inflation over the summer months. Some were unmarried couples, others friends or near-strangers joining together to take advantage of the tax system.

Large numbers have since married and should have told their lenders. Others have bought out mortgage shazars,

without telling the lender because they do not want to lose the tax relief worth around £800 a year.

Mark Boleat, director general of the Council of Mortgage Lenders, said: "The sums can be quite large. A couple could have got married two or three years ago without realising they had to tell their lender."

It is when the tax officials from the Miras unit at Bootle visit lenders that the illicit tax relief can come to light. The Inland Revenue made 140 such audits last year.

Some lenders feel they are being "fined" unfairly when they have not been given the full information. They argue that if couples tell the Revenue they have married in

order to get the married couple's tax allowance, this information should be passed on to help lenders give the correct amount of tax relief.

It is usually the lenders that pay most of the extra tax relief. This is because of the way the additional tax bill is arrived at, explained the Abbey National, which is negotiating with the Revenue about how much it should pay.

The second largest mortgage lender said it could not charge individuals, as the Revenue took a sample of mortgages and, from its check on those, calculated how much extra tax relief had been granted in error on the Abbey's total mortgage book.

John Hutchinson, retail operations director at the Nationwide Building Society said: "There are quite significant sums of money involved. Unless the borrowers grossly misled us we would normally stand the bill ourselves. It is usually a genuine mistake." He added that the society's mortgage terms and conditions, like those of other lenders, required borrowers to inform it of a change in circumstances.

The Leeds Permanent Building Society, which was last audited in January 1991, said it was more watchful for a change in borrowers' circumstances now. "There is a limit in how far we can go.

After all we are not a detective agency."

The society does not claim back any money from borrowers for overpaid tax relief. "There haven't been any cases where it is clear that borrowers have deliberately kept us in the dark."

The Halifax, the largest building society, said its last audit was also early last year, and before the Revenue arrived it had checked all accounts opened since 1989 to check the information was correct. The mortgage payments have to be increased back to the date of the marriage. The Halifax would expect borrowers to pay but would negotiate if the bill was going to cause problems.

The Woolwich Building Society is currently being audited by the Revenue. It says it expects borrowers to inform the society of any relevant changes. "When young couples came in for loans before August 1988 we told them during the interview that they should come and tell us immediately they got married."

The society added: "We would only charge a borrower if we believed they kept back information deliberately. If there was obvious deception all mortgage tax relief at source would be removed from the loan and they would have to make gross mortgage payments."



Hutchinson: mistake

Do the miles or pay the tax, company car drivers warned

EMPLOYEES with company cars are taking to the roads in large numbers to avoid paying extra tax. If they do not complete at least 2,501 miles in the course of their business in the year to April 5 they could face an additional tax bill for £1,780. Their employers could also have to pay an extra £462.80 in national insurance contributions (Lindsay Cook writes).

Recent Budgets have pushed up the tax charged on the two million-plus company cars. And those drivers who clock up 2,500 miles or less pay 50 per cent more tax on the benefit than those who cover 2,501 to 18,000 miles in the course of a year.

Travel between home and the office cannot be counted towards the total, which creates something of a dilemma to many employees who prefer to travel by train to catch up with work when visiting clients, other offices or attending conferences.

Those who did not get their mileage in during the summer months now face early starts in uncertain weather if they are still a long way short of their target. Tom Minding, taxation manager at Barclays Financial Services, is advising clients and staff to get their miles in. "If they are not careful they might end up paying 50 per cent more for their car for being one mile short."

Drivers of modest cars with engine capacities of 1401cc to 2,000cc would pay £331.25 extra for falling short on mileage if they were basic rate taxpayers. Higher rate taxpayers would pay £530. The bill would be less if their company cars were more than four years old.

Two-litre cars would cost an extra £531.25 for a 25 per cent taxpayer, and £850 for a 40 per cent payer. Employers also have an interest in encouraging their employees to take to the roads. The driver of a 2,000cc car could cost his employer an extra £221 in national insurance liability if he or she does not exceed



2,500 miles during the year. Company car drivers with more expensive models have most to lose. If their car is worth more than £19,251 when new the cost could be £1,400 plus an extra £286 for the employer to pay in national insurance contributions.

Those with deluxe cars worth more than £29,001 when new and still under four years old would pay £1,780 and land the employer with extra bill of £462.80.

Mr Minding said those with status cars often had most difficulty in getting to the required mileage. He personally is responsible for offices all over the country and has no difficulty in exceeding 2,500 miles.

All drivers of company cars need to keep a detailed record of their business mileage, he said. The running total can also act as a warning if they are not exceeding 200 miles a month. "The tax bill has increased over recent years for company cars, but they are

still worth having. A fairly modest car costs £4,000 a year to run and repair. The tax bill is less."

The taxable value of a 1,400cc to 2,000cc car is £2,650. This means that the tax bill for a basic rate taxpayer with one is £662.50. Those drivers who exceed 18,000 miles a year pay half the tax bill.

The Inland Revenue begins to send out assessments in late summer to drivers who pay tax as they earn who are under the mileage limit. The money owing then has to be paid as a lump sum within weeks if the driver does not appeal against it.

Mr Minding said that many bank managers have a few customers well outside their normal area to make sure that they can easily achieve the 2,500 miles. Many other company car drivers increase their mileage in the early spring to meet the target.

Clive Tulloch, partner at Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte,

the accountant, said people who got a company car during the course of a year had a proportionately lower mileage to complete but could still fall short because of poor motoring conditions in the winter months.

The firm reminds all its clients of the results of doing the mileage.

Because it is tax, the importance is magnified in many people's minds and they become determined to get over 2,500 miles. Mr Tulloch, who is the author of the Coopers Deloitte annual company car tax guide, does not have one himself. "I would probably be better off but the partner's scheme is so complicated and I am quite happy with my modest little car," he said.

A further increase in the tax on company cars in this year's Budget could be less likely than in recent years because there may not be enough time to implement any complicated changes before the general election.

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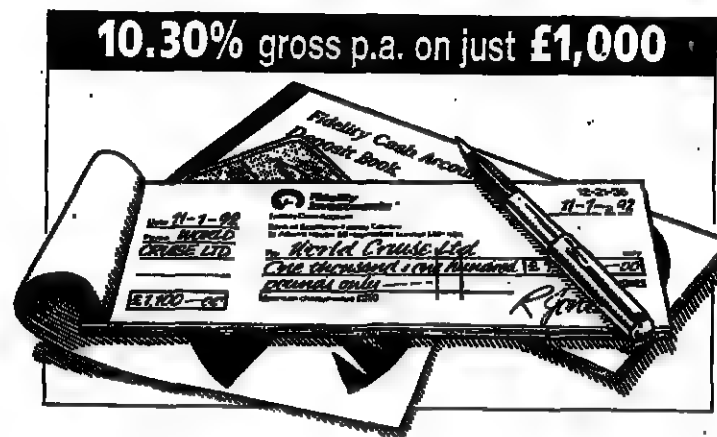
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'Infallible' BT Chargecard was misused

From C.J. Youldon

Sir, I was interested to read Mr I. Baird's letter (Weekend Money, January 11) in which he warned readers of the problems he experienced with a BT Chargecard, because we have had similar problems. In December 1990 we received our quarterly phone bill, which I failed to check in detail because the total was similar to previous bills, and I did not realise that it included £165 of Chargecard calls which we had not made. On February 25, 1991, whilst on holiday in Florida, my wife's handbag was stolen, whereupon I immediately phoned Cardwise, who cancelled all

her cards, including, fortunately, the Chargecard, although at the time she did not have it with her.

Our next bill, in March 1991, included Chargecard calls to the value of £400 which we had not made. We were told that BT could not be responsible in any way and that the system was infallible.

We had now lost £565 but I was somewhat surprised to receive a bill in June 1990 with £1,061 included for Chargecard calls. Over £560 of these calls were made after February 23 but also £213 were for calls made in 1990!

Once again I contacted BT. All calls made after February

25 were cancelled and after 3 months of aggravation we at last obtained a credit for 90% of the Chargecard calls. I would strongly advise anyone who has a BT Chargecard to cancel it immediately to avoid the possibility of having a repeat of our problems. We have just received our December 1991 bill with a total of £29 for Chargecard calls made since May. Still, I must rest assured that the BT system is infallible.

Yours faithfully,
C.J. YOULDON,
Managing Director,
Youldon Holdings Ltd,
South Road Templefields,
Harlow, Essex.

Trying times for globe-trotter

From B. Young

Sir, As a house-owning globe-trotting creditworthy high earner who has qualified for the Co-op gold card I was a bit disappointed to find there are only 15 calendar days between the statement date and due date, which could be a bit difficult if the statement arrives just after the start of one of my lengthy high-powered business trips or exotic holidays.

Worse, though, is the continuing need to pay the account so much earlier every month: Barclaycard may cost £8 per year but it gives 25 days to pay instead of 15 at the Co-op, which means Barclaycard is actually cheaper for anyone with an average monthly bill over £350 (if they

are investing the unpaid-as-yet money at 7%).

However one's deepest sympathy should be reserved for the 50% of new Gold Card customers unlucky enough to be on the Co-op's payment cycle 14, whose latest statements would have been dated December 19, dispatched on December 21, delivered (perhaps) on December 23, and requiring payment January 3. Between December 23 and January 3 there were only 6 working days. But what does it say on the back of the statement? "Allow 7 working days for your payment to reach us!"

Yours faithfully,
B. YOUNG,
Harrow,
Middlesex.

LETTERS



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Inflated salaries cost pension funds

From Mr C.P. Pountney

Sir, It was reported (January 3) that 180 pension salesmen each of "at least 10 years experience" will earn on average £50,000 per year with possible shareholdings each of £150,000 after three years and £300,000 after five years. That is a total of £99 million with no rises after five years, abstracted from pension contributions.

Pension funds are made attractive by tax relief incentives therefore the government is responsible for these inflated salary levels to a non-essential work force. Is there

any wonder that our country is losing out in the essential areas of science, engineering, research and development? However, it supports the Watkins (a former boss of mine) theory that the nearer a profession is to the money the higher the return. Scientists and engineers being at some distance when compared with accountants, liquidators, pension salesmen etc.

Yours faithfully,
COLIN P. POUNTNEY,
112 High Street,
Broughton,
Kettering,
Northamptonshire.

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Registrars at fault

From Mr B. Whittingham

Sir, Now that a critical spotlight has been focused (by Mrs K.M. Watt, January 11) on company registrars, may I draw attention to certain other problems?

Not infrequently we receive a cash dividend after carefully sending a scrip dividend election form to the registrar concerned. Naturally there is no redress and the postal services can be blamed. Possibly one should incur the expense of the recorded delivery service. Some registrars ask for sight of powers of attorney which have already been registered by them previously — on one occasion in respect of the same stock.

In recent months we have received share certificates in open envelopes, where the flap had neither been stuck down nor tucked in. So far two major banks have been at fault in this regard. My complaint is based on the fact that it is market practice to send certificates at shareholders' risk, and then registrars demand around £20 to replace a lost certificate (based upon administration costs and a premium for an insurance indemnity, lest the original should be produced by some third party).

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN WHITTINGHAM,
8 Alford Close,
Horsham,
West Sussex.

Tax on one-earner families 'unfair'

From Mrs Anna Lines

Sir, The campaigners for tax relief on childcare (Weekend Money, Jan 11) ignore the present fiscal discrimination against one-earner families with dependent children.

Such families, usually with very young children or raising an above average number of children, already pay proportionately more tax than two-earner couples (who may be childless). This is because they can normally claim only 1½ tax allowances as against 2½ allowances for the latter. Although every non-employed wife is entitled to a personal allowance of £3,295 p.a., she may not transfer any part of it to her husband, increasing the tax allowance to the family as a unit and thus boosting net income.

Some of these families may have to get by on one income through necessity (e.g. lack of employment opportunities or the care of elderly relatives).

but the vast majority do so because they feel that children's and society's interests are better served by a full-time parental presence at home than by the vagaries of third party childcare.

If the Treasury is able to find £200 million to be spent on "childcare", the fairest way to distribute this money would be to add it to Child Benefit or to reintroduce a realistic child tax allowance.

All those with dependent children bear costs and responsibilities not borne by the childless — and those whose children have grown up. How our children are cared for is a private matter, but it would be a blatant injustice to expect already unfairly taxed one-earner families to subsidise the third party childcare costs of two-earner families.

Yours faithfully,
ANNA LINES,
Full Time Mothers,
57 Oakley Street, SW3.

INTEREST RATES ROUNDUP

	Weekly rate	Compounded at rates 25% 60%	Minimum Investment	Notes	Contact
BANKS					
Ordinary Dep A/c Typical	5.50	2.50	2.12	none/min	7 day
Fixed Term Deposits:					
Barclays	7.17	7.17	8.74	25,000-50,000	1 mth 071-282 1887
Bank of Scotland	7.25	7.25	8.82	25,000-50,000	3 mth 071-282 1887
Co-operative	6.57	6.57	8.18	2,500-no max	1 mth Local Branch
Ulster	6.54	6.54	8.17	2,500-no max	3 mth Local Branch
Yorkshire	6.54	6.54	8.17	2,500-no max	1 mth 0742 222222
Midland	6.75	6.75	8.40	10,000-no max	3 mth 0742 222222
Northwest	6.75	6.75	8.40	10,000-24,000	1 mth 071-728 1000
TSB	6.50	6.50	8.15	10,000-24,000	3 mth 071-728 1000
HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.48	6.34	2,500	none 081-442 7777
Barclays	6.78	6.78	6.73	2,500	none 0804 282881
Co-operative	1.80	1.80	1.80	1,000	none 071 885 8543
Ulster	2.25	2.25	2.25	1,000	none 051 986 2076
Yorkshire	1.80	1.80	1.80	1,000	none 0273 433372
Midland	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 0742 522828
Northwest	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 071-674 8374
Special Reserve	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 081-688 8886
Royal Bank of Scotland	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 081-688 8886
TSB Bank	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 071-688 8886
Ulster	2.30	2.30	2.30	2,000	none 071-688 8886
BUILDING SOCIETIES					
Ordinary Share	5.25	5.25	4.20	1 mth	none
Best Buy - largest income:					
Portsmouth	7.50	7.50	6.50	500 mth	best
Chesham & Ch	6.50	6.50	6.50	2,500 mth	best
Northampton	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	30 day
Salisbury	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	30 day
Bedford & West	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	1 year
Best Buy - all income:					
Southdown	7.50	7.50	6.10	1 mth	best
Northwich & P	6.50	6.50	6.10	2,500 mth	best
Northampton	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	30 day
Salisbury	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	30 day
Bedford & West	6.10	6.10	6.10	2,500 mth	1 year
Cash/Charge Accounts					
Card Cash	5.25	5.25	4.20	30 mth	Police rate
Advance & Life	5.00	5.00	4.20	30 mth	Police rate
Cash Plus	5.00	5.00	4.20	30 mth	Police rate
Monetary	1.45	1.45	1.45	1 year	Police rate
NATIONAL SAVINGS					
Ordinary A/c	5.00	3.75	3.00	£10,000	5 day 041-648-4885
Investment A/c	5.00	3.75	3.00	£10,000	1 mth 041-648-4885
Income Bond	10.25	7.50	6.10	2,500-5,000	1 mth 041-648-4885
Deposit Bond	10.25	7.50	6.10	2,500-5,000	1 mth 041-648-4885
5th Issue Cert	8.50	7.50	6.10	2,500-5,000	5 mth 041-648-4885
Yearly Plan	8.50	7.50	6.10	2,500-5,000	5 mth 041-648-4885
Children's Bond	11.84	11.84	11.84	2,500-5,000	14 day 041-648-4885
Gen Cert Bond	8.01	8.01	8.01	2,500-5,000	14 day 041-648-4885
Capital Bond	11.84	11.84	11.84	2,500-5,000	14 day 041-648-4885
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS					
Prosperity	8.50	8.50	7.50	25,000 mth	1 mth Payout from 1st day
Liberty Life	8.50	8.50	7.50	25,000 mth	2 mth Payout from 1st day
Prosperity	8.50	8.50	7.50	25,000 mth	3 mth Payout from 1st day
Liberty Life	8.50	8.50	7.50	25,000 mth	4 mth Payout from 1st day
Canada Life	8.50	8.50	7.50	25,000 mth	5 mth Payout from 1st day
Other Rates					
HM (50-50)	4.45%				
Bank Basic Rate	10.5%				
Personal Loan	12.5%				
Credit Card	18.0-22.5%				
Holiday rates					
Spanish Pension					175.50
French Pension					0.42
Greek Pension					220.00
Italian Pension					205.00

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930	303	Duff Papp	700		2.4	0.
640	400	Chesiste	403		18.5	0.
50	27	Crawford	27		0.	0.
60	27	Clarke Nicholls	40		0.7	2.
82	23	Clayton	27		2.0	3.
805	720	Dansen	800		24.0	3.
120	74	Davis Easter	120		0.2	0.
130	7	Edwards Tawn	72		0.	0.
130	7	De Morgan	6		0.	0.
138	120	Dewrose	138		5.5	5.

[illegible]

23	1	Hammer	171	0
24	1	Hammer	171	0
25	1	Hammer	171	0
26	1	Hammer	171	0
27	1	Hammer	171	0
28	1	Hammer	171	0
29	1	Hammer	171	0
30	1	Hammer	171	0
31	1	Hammer	171	0
32	1	Hammer	171	0
33	1	Hammer	171	0
34	1	Hammer	171	0
35	1	Hammer	171	0
36	1	Hammer	171	0
37	1	Hammer	171	0
38	1	Hammer	171	0
39	1	Hammer	171	0
40	1	Hammer	171	0
41	1	Hammer	171	0
42	1	Hammer	171	0
43	1	Hammer	171	0
44	1	Hammer	171	0
45	1	Hammer	171	0
46	1	Hammer	171	0
47	1	Hammer	171	0
48	1	Hammer	171	0
49	1	Hammer	171	0
50	1	Hammer	171	0
51	1	Hammer	171	0
52	1	Hammer	171	0
53	1	Hammer	171	0
54	1	Hammer	171	0
55	1	Hammer	171	0
56	1	Hammer	171	0
57	1	Hammer	171	0
58	1	Hammer	171	0
59	1	Hammer	171	0
60	1	Hammer	171	0
61	1	Hammer	171	0
62	1	Hammer	171	0
63	1	Hammer	171	0
64	1	Hammer	171	0
65	1	Hammer	171	0
66	1	Hammer	171	0
67	1	Hammer	171	0
68	1	Hammer	171	0
69	1	Hammer	171	0
70	1	Hammer	171	0
71	1	Hammer	171	0
72	1	Hammer	171	0
73	1	Hammer	171	0
74	1	Hammer	171	0
75	1	Hammer	171	0
76	1	Hammer	171	0
77	1	Hammer	171	0
78	1	Hammer	171	0
79	1	Hammer	171	0
80	1	Hammer	171	0
81	1	Hammer	171	0
82	1	Hammer	171	0
83	1	Hammer	171	0
84	1	Hammer	171	0
85	1	Hammer	171	0
86	1	Hammer	171	0
87	1	Hammer	171	0
88	1	Hammer	171	0
89	1	Hammer	171	0
90	1	Hammer	171	0
91	1	Hammer	171	0
92	1	Hammer	171	0
93	1	Hammer	171	0
94	1	Hammer	171	0
95	1	Hammer	171	0
96	1	Hammer	171	0
97	1	Hammer	171	0
98	1	Hammer	171	0
99	1	Hammer	171	0
100	1	Hammer	171	0

SHOES, LEATHER					
33	26	Adams ¹	26	0.3	3.4
34	27	Adams ¹	27	0.3	3.4
35	27	Handman	280	0.2	2.2
36	183	Lambert	280	0.2	2.2
37	183	Lambert	280	0.2	2.2
38	119	Center	184	0.2	2.2
39	119	Soyars & Fisher	40	0.2	2.2
40	283	Levy	184	0.2	2.2

TEXTILES						
457	71	A&H	428	1.5	12.0	
458	71	Allied Text	428	1.5	12.0	
459	60	Boselman Inc.	441	0.7	5.6	
460	60	Boselman Inc.	441	0.7	5.6	
461	146	McC	449	0.1	0.8	
462	146	McC	449	0.1	0.8	
463	124	CHI Co.	446	0.7	5.6	
464	124	CHI Co.	446	0.7	5.6	
465	217	183	Claremont Co.	211	0.3	2.2
466	217	183	Claremont Co.	211	0.3	2.2
467	100	135	Dowman	174	0.8	6.4
468	100	135	Dowman	174	0.8	6.4
469	50	50	Dupont	73	0.5	4.0
470	50	50	Dupont	73	0.5	4.0
471	50	50	Dupont	73	0.5	4.0
472	50	50	Dupont	73	0.5	4.0
473	123	63	Halsing, Pines	104	2.2	17.6
474	123	63	Halsing, Pines	104	2.2	17.6
475	285	280	Halsing, Pines	354	0.2	1.6
476	285	280	Halsing, Pines	354	0.2	1.6
477	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
478	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
479	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
480	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
481	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
482	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
483	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
484	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
485	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
486	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
487	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
488	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
489	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
490	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
491	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
492	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
493	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
494	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
495	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
496	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
497	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
498	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
499	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6
500	100	187	Lambert	184	0.2	1.6

[illegible]

233	116	NI	NI	231	+ 6.2	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	232	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	233	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	234	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	235	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	236	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	237	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	238	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	239	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	240	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	241	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	242	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	243	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	244	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	245	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	246	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	247	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	248	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	249	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	250	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	251	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	252	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	253	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	254	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	255	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	256	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	257	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	258	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	259	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	260	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	261	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	262	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	263	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	264	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	265	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	266	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	267	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	268	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	269	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	270	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	271	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	272	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	273	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	274	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	275	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	276	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	277	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	278	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	279	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	280	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	281	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	282	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	283	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	284	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	285	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	286	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	287	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	288	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	289	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	290	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	291	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	292	+ 1.0	2.7
50	60	NI	NI	293	+ 1.0	2

23

Institut

[illegible][illegible]

Successful accountants' exam candidates continued

Continued from previous page

(Price Waterhouse), London

M

Mullan 15 (Price Waterhouse).

Young), Newcastle Upon Tyne; Mar-

Marwick), Leicester, Myerscough T A
(Crown-Point Water, Sander & Co)

London; Nicoll S D (ICPMG) Perth

O'Reilly T. C. Plunk & Co. Lond.

Close

(Sinclair), London, MA, Bachelor L J

Lyford & Deloitte, London; Parks, (Frank & Young), Electric Avenue N.

Losses

Swindon, FA Branch N C (Coopers & Lysons)

Hunter, London; Sargent R A (1975) *Pharmacology*, London; Evans

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FA, CHENG E (Arthur Andersen & Co)

A E OCPMAG Post Mar

10-4-52

Critchley S P *Exposure & Liberty*

Rhodes, Linda

... ..

Lochner, Aik. D'Amico, D. (Arb.)

Marwick, London: William
Owen: 1968, Marwick, 1968

19

Conclusions

IV.

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(continued)

[illegible]

Switzerland dominate first men's downhill on the Hahnenkamm

Heinzer shows golden form

FROM DAVID POWELL
IN KITZBÜHEL

AUSTRIA had a Sheffield Wednesday sort of day yesterday. They took a thrashing at home from their near neighbours and rivals.

Led by Franz Heinzer, the Swiss team monopolised the top three places in the World Cup downhill in St Anton, today's is the official Kitzbühel downhill — Heinzer confirmed his status as the favourite for the Olympic gold medal on La Face piste next month.

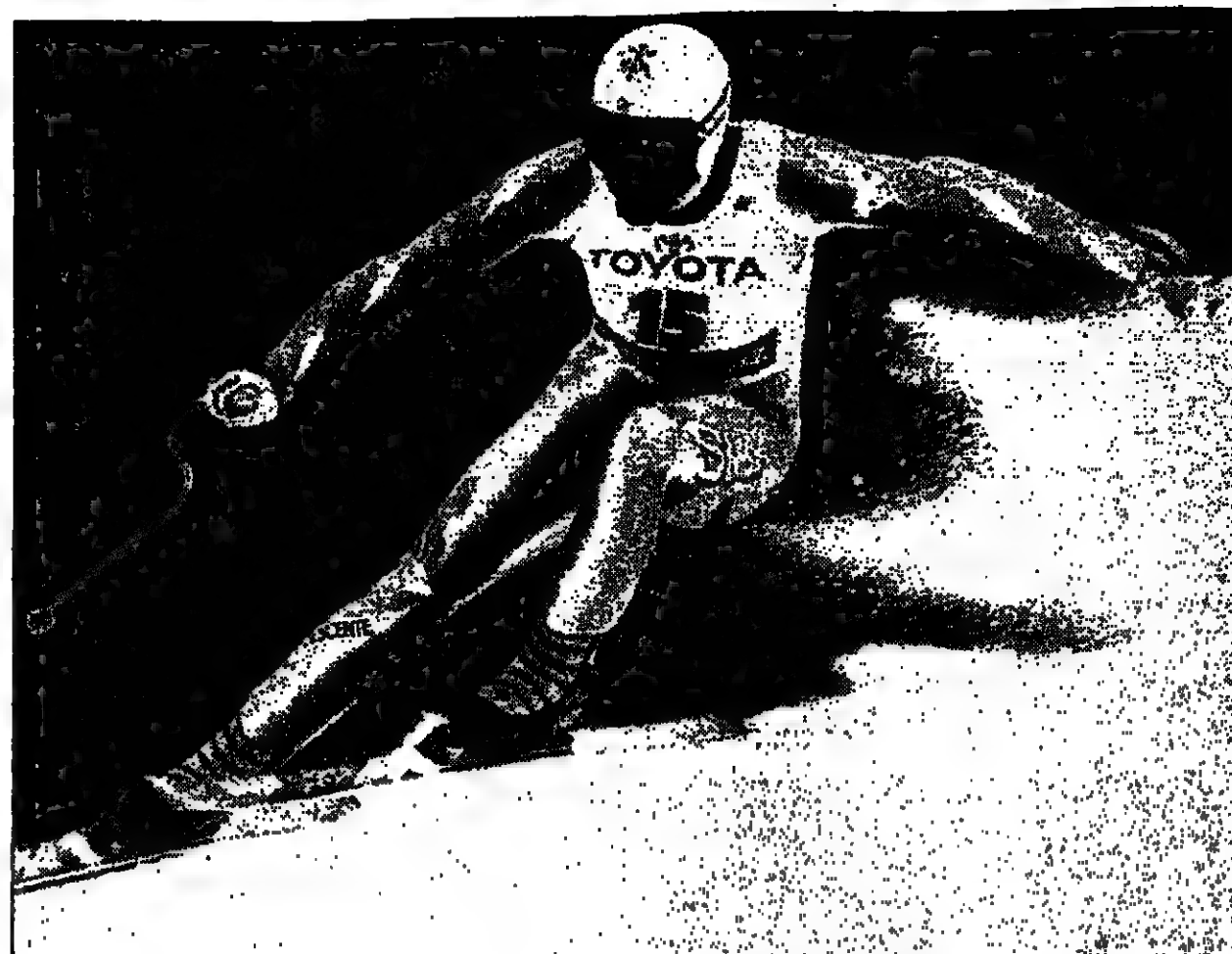
In the first of two races on the Hahnenkamm on successive days — yesterday's was to make up for a cancelled World Cup downhill in St Anton, today's is the official Kitzbühel downhill — Heinzer confirmed his status as the favourite for the Olympic gold medal on La Face piste next month.

Aged 29, he has found success late in his skiing life. His record has been nothing special until last year, when in his tenth season, he became World Cup and world downhill champion. There seems no stopping him now.

"I wanted to win here to consolidate my confidence three weeks before the Olympics," Heinzer said. "It will be easier for me to take risks on the La Face piste now that I know precisely where my limits are."

The Swiss supporters had much to ring their cowbells for, as Xavier Gigandet, Daniel Mahrer and Heinzer each, in turn, beat the ten-year-old Strief piste record. That was the final insult the record had belonged to Hatti Wehrather, an Austrian.

The notoriously difficult Hahnenkamm has become part of World Cup legend. But while five of the top 15 seeds failed to finish in Garmisch-Partenkirchen last weekend, all got down here.



Taking it to the edge: Heinzer on his way to his second victory on the Hahnenkamm yesterday

The Hahnenkamm, where competition has been held since 1930, seems to be going soft in its old age.

No doubt mindful of the casualties in Garmisch, where two leading racers had their season ended, the turns were set less severely than in the past. Heinzer took 1min 56.68sec, compared with Wehrather's 1:57.20 record. "I am proud to have set the record; it gives special mean-

ing to this win," Heinzer said. Heinzer has been in the forefront of the Swiss team's recovery, a quiet man getting on with his job. His preparation is thorough to the point of mentally rehearsing each of his races 20 times before going for the real thing.

Today he can become the first skier since Franz Klammer in 1977 to win three successive races on the Hahnenkamm, and he will

presumably keep to his new six, six centimetres shorter than normal, worn for the first time yesterday. "They helped me to be aggressive at the turns," he said.

Ronald Duncan provided Britain with a rare day on the World Cup scoreboard. The first 30 earned points and he was 28th. Only a loss of form in the closing stages prevented him from finishing in the top 15.

RESULTS: 1. F. Heinzer (Switz), 1min 56.68sec; 2. D. Mahrer (Switz), 1:56.94; 3. X. Gigandet (Switz), 1:57.04; 4. L. Mahrer (Switz), 1:57.05; 5. W. Bader (Switz), 1:57.07; 6. H. Mahrer (Austria), 1:57.22; 7. G. Mahrer (Austria), 1:57.23; 8. J. P. Thoenen (Neth), 1:57.42; 9. C. Göttsch (Neth), 1:57.44; 10. P. Ortlieb (Austria), 1:57.74. British placing: 28. R. Duncan, 1:58.52. Downhill standings: 1. Heinzer, 31 points; 2. A. J. King (Switz), 27; 3. Ortlieb, 21; 4. L. Stock (Austria), 19; equal 5. Mahrer and Gigandet, 18; 6. Mahrer, 17; 7. P. Ortlieb, 16; 8. A. J. King, 15; 9. M. G. G. (Switz), 14; 10. A. J. King, 13; 11. G. Mahrer (Austria), 12; 12. A. J. King, 11; 13. G. Mahrer (Austria), 10; 14. A. J. King, 9; 15. G. Mahrer (Austria), 8; 16. A. J. King, 7; 17. G. Mahrer (Austria), 6; 18. A. J. King, 5; 19. G. Mahrer (Austria), 4; 20. A. J. King, 3; 21. G. Mahrer (Austria), 2; 22. A. J. King, 1; 23. G. Mahrer (Austria), 0; 24. A. J. King, 0; 25. G. Mahrer (Austria), 0; 26. A. J. King, 0; 27. G. Mahrer (Austria), 0; 28. A. J. King, 0; 29. G. Mahrer (Austria), 0; 30. A. J. King, 0.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Leeds attempt to renew title challenge

BY KEITH MACKLIN

THE rehabilitation of Leeds after their collapse in the Regal Trophy final against Widnes last Saturday begins in the Stones Bitter championship at Salford today. The sides met in the Regal Trophy semi-final, with the Yorkshiremen pulling away to win after Salford had set up an early lead.

Leeds, who now regard the return of Eilery Hanley next

month as a matter of urgency, cannot possibly play as badly again as they did in last week's flop at Wigan. At least, that is the opinion of their coach, Doug Laughton, and if the men from Headingley can rediscover the form that took them to the Trophy final and to the top of the first division last month, they can renew their championship challenge and rebuild confidence for a tilt at the S&K Cup Challenge Cup, which begins

with the tie against Bramley, of the third division, at Elland Road next Tuesday.

In tomorrow's matches, Wigan expect to have their captain, Dean Bell, back in the squad after his rib cage injury. They visit Hull, whose erratic form this season cannot encourage their supporters to think they can overturn Wigan, the champions, who seem back on course for a third successive title now that they have

recovered from the loss of Hanley to Leeds.

Offish, having at last scored his first try of the season last week, will be looking for more at Thurro Hall, but the Wigan coach, John Monie, is at pains to point out that Wigan are essentially a team and no special effort will be made to get the ball out to Offish if he conflicts with their highly-successful game plan.

St Helens, who face a board of directors' enquiry

next Wednesday into the alleged brawl against Featherstone Rovers, attempt to maintain their own championship challenge at home to Wakefield Trinity. Widnes, who seemed to have returned to their best form against Leeds last Saturday, are at home to the disappointing Hull side, which was among the championship hopefuls at the start of the season, but which is now adrift in the lower reaches of the table.

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Barclays League
First division

Aston Villa v Sheffield Wed
Leeds Utd v Wigan
Luton v West Ham (all tickets)
Manchester City v Coventry
Notts Co v Manchester Utd
Oldham v Liverpool (all tickets)
QPR v Arsenal
Sheff Wed v Norwich
Tottenham v Southampton
Wimbledon v Chelsea

Second division

Barnley v Plymouth
Bristol City v Southend
Cambridge U v Grimsby
Derby Co v Sunderland
Doncaster v Bristol R
Leicester City v Swindon
Millwall v Middlesbrough
Newcastle v Southampton
Oxford v Port Vale
Portsmouth v Blackburn
Wolverhampton v Watford

Third division

Bolton v Hartlepool
Bournemouth v Wigan
Bradford v Hull
Chester v Brentford
Fulham v Shrewsbury
Huddersfield v Peterborough
Leiston v Walsley
Preston v Exeter
Stockport v Darlington
Stoke v Reading
Swansea v Birmingham
Torquay v Bury

Fourth division

Burnley v Gillingham
Chesterfield v Doncaster
Crewe v Southend
Hemel Hempstead v Hereford
Hendon v Wrexham
Macclesfield v Northampton
Rochdale v Crewe
Rotherham v Mansfield
Walsall v Cardiff
York v Carlisle

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Banbridge's fine win proves embarrassing result for Nicholson

BY RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

EVEN the most knowledgeable trainers can be made to look chumps by the racing game, as David Nicholson and David Elsworth discovered to their joy at Kempton yesterday.

Nicholson trained half the field in the four-runner Easter Hero Handicap Chase, but was convinced Al Hashami would beat his stable companion Banbridge following an impressive piece of mid-week work.

And so it looked after the third-last fence where Certain Style fell while challenging, to leave Al Hashami nicely clear. But Banbridge suddenly started to sprout wings and, when Al Hashami made an error at the next fence, the upset was complete.

Nicholson, who instructed Richard Dunwoody to ride Al Hashami, joked: "I have just had a ticking-off from the jockey. I am sending him to Warwick tomorrow to ride Shamama, so I hope I have got that right."

He added: "I thought Al Hashami would win today. Banbridge breaks blood vessels and got beat at Wincanton on Boxing day when he should have won after downing tools from the last."

Elsworth was even more surprised when the well-bred Hashar made a winning debut over timber in the Walton Novices' Hurdle.

"I was sure he would need

it. Whatever he did today, he was going to improve on. He's probably a very high-class horse."

"I thought he would blow up and all my punters were put off."

Having taken up the lead after four flights, Hashar showed real grit to withstand the challenges of Mubin and Green's Van Goyen. With the runner-up, Green's Van Goyen, having won his two previous contests, the form of the race could be decent.

Hashar used to be owned by the Aga Khan and was trained on the Flat by John Orr in Ireland.

The lightly-raced Darshaan colt was purchased by Billy Brown, owner of Major Inquiry, just over a month ago and together with stable companions, Duffarra and Master Foodbroker, will be aimed by Elsworth at the Daily Express Triumph Hurdle, a race he won in 1980 with Heighin and last year with Oh So Risky.

Corals were sufficiently impressed with the winner to install him as 20-1 joint favourite with Cammy Chronicle for the Cheltenham race.

The disappointment of the race was Highland Air, trained by Ian Balding, who had reportedly been working impressively at home. The Queen Mother's four-year-old finished last.

Balding had better luck in the Ashford Novices' Hurdle when Spinning's class proved too much for Ashford Opepe, the heavily-backed favourite. Paul M. Heighin's Gilt of Gold gelding, a tricky customer who seems to have permanent wish to run in a left-handed arc rather than in a straight line.

His antics make it hard work for a jockey, even on a left-handed course. On a tight right-handed track, steering becomes close to impossible.

By the time Jimmy Frost reached the short Kempton straight yesterday, his right arm was numb due to the unequal struggle. The jockey finally let Spinning have it his own way. Despite veering gradually to the left, he still had too much pace for his pursuers.

Frost had difficult ride on Spinning

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Twin Oaks to top the bill again

TWIN Oaks is taken to win the Peter Marsh Chase at Haydock Park today when that he is back on his happy hunting ground again.

Last season's Gordon Richards-trained 12-year-old ran up a remarkable sequence on the Lancashire track by winning four times in succession there and earning his connections £50,000 in the process.

Following a disappointing first run of the current term at Chepstow where he was eventually pulled up, he was eventually pulled up in the Welsh National, Twin Oaks again revealed his liking for Haydock when he made virtually all the running to win the Mitsubishi Shogun Trophy by 20 lengths with 12 stone on his back.

That suggests he will be hard to beat again today with 4lb less to carry, even though he has actually been re-rated. Twin Oaks had Aquilifer seven lengths behind in third place when he won the Greenall's Gold Cup on the same track last March.

Now Aquilifer has a good

Two years ago, Michael Morris sent Trapper John over from Ireland for the Jim Ennis Construction Premier Long Distance Hurdle only to be foiled by that good mare Mrs Muck, who was at the height of her powers that day.

This time the four Irish eight-year-old, who went on to win the Waterford Crystal Stayers' Hurdle at Cheltenham during the same season, has the form that should enable him to give 7lb to Peter Easterby's improved stayer Burgoyne, who made Cab On Target dig deep into his reserves at Newbury in November.

Winnie The Witch, another who did likewise at Cheltenham on New Year's eve, returns to active duty with a sporting chance of winning the FK Roofing Champion Hurdle at York.

While being impressed by that performance, albeit over a longer trip, I am happy to go up on Granville Again, even though he has to give 12lb to Ken Bridgewater's improved mare.

Granville Again has a good chance of winning this grade two race, but I prefer Granville Again, who looks a high-class hurdler in the making over this trip.

His stable companion Primitive Sinner, fourth to Good Profile at Chepstow last time, can round off the day in style for Martin Pipe and Peter

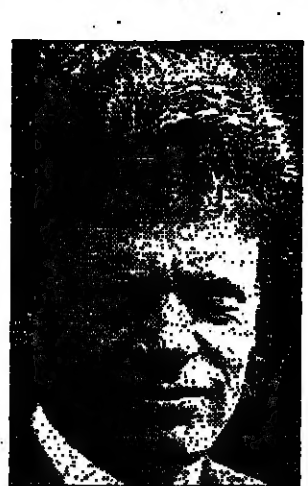
Soudamore by winning the Garswood Novices' Hurdle. Otherwise, the programme should be noteworthy for a Charlie Brooks-Graham Bradley double, thanks to Parson's Thomas (2.35), and My Young Man (2.55), both of whom have been in sparkling form of late.

The former champion hurdler Beech Road attempts to better his record over fences by winning the Bicar Raza Novices' Chase at Kempton.

I respect the Newmarket trainer Mark Tompkins' decision to saddle Jungle Knife for the Bicar Raza Novices' Hurdle. This is just a week after what appeared to be quite a heavy fall at the last hurdle in the Ladbroke at Leopardstown, but for which Jungle Knife would probably have been placed.

With the easy Newcastle winner Cammy Chronicle also contesting the Red Rose Four-Year-Old Hurdle at Warwick, Tompkins certainly faces a busy and probably profitable afternoon.

With the easy Newcastle winner Cammy Chronicle also contesting the Red Rose Four-Year-Old Hurdle at Warwick, Tompkins certainly faces a busy and probably profitable afternoon.



Morris Haydock raid with Trapper John

The Jimmy Fitzgerald-trained Sybilian also has a good chance of winning this grade two race, but I prefer Granville Again, who looks a high-class hurdler in the making over this trip.

His stable companion Primitive Sinner, fourth to Good Profile at Chepstow last time, can round off the day in style for Martin Pipe and Peter

MANDARIN	THUNDERER	RICHARD EVANS
1.20 Trapper John	1.20 Tyne Bridge	1.20 Burgoyne
1.00 GRANVILLE AGAIN	1.00 Granville Again	1.35 Roman King
1.35 Twin Oaks	2.05 Twin Oaks (nap)	2.05 PARSONS
2.35 Parson's Thomas	2.35 My Young Man	THOMAS (nap)
2.55 My Young Man	3.05 Primitive Sinner	
3.05 Primitive Sinner		

The Times Private Handicapper's top ratings: 1.35 TWIN OAKS.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES)

12.30 JIM ENNIS CONSTRUCTION PREMIER LONG DISTANCE HURDLE (Grade 1, £28,200: 3m) (8 runners)			ESB1
1-4091	TRAPPER JOHN 21 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10	C. Swan 58	
2-1242	TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10	P. Scudamore 57	
3-2315	GAY RUFFIAN 29 (C.S.) (J. Jones) D. B. B. 11-7	D. J. B. 56	
4-2302	BURGUYNE 26 (P. S. S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10	L. W. 59	
5-1111	GRANVILLE AGAIN 28 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10	S. K. 50	
6-1242	TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10	N. D. 50	
7-1253	UPTON PARK 18 (S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10	M. D. 51	
8-2302	BURGUYNE 26 (P. S. S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10	M. D. 51	
BETTING: 54 Tyne Bridge 28, 1 Trapper John, 3-2 Gay Ruffian, 12-1 Upton Park, 12-1 Gay Ruffian, 23-10 Burguyne, 11-10 Granville Again, 11-10 Tyne Bridge, 11-10 Upton Park, 11-10 Burguyne.			

BETTING: 5-4 Tyne Bridge, 5-1 Trapper John, 5-2 Burgoyne, 10-1 Upton Park, 12-1 Gay Ruffian, 20-1 Granville Again, 25-1 Roman King, 30-1 Primitive Sinner.

1801: MEETINGS ABANDONED - FROST

TRAPPER JOHN 21 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10

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GRANVILLE AGAIN 28 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10

1.35 PETER MARSH CHASE

(Limited handicap: grade II, £16,200: 3m) (8 runners)

1-1111 TRAPPER JOHN 21 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

2-1242 TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10

3-2315 GAY RUFFIAN 29 (C.S.) (J. Jones) D. B. B. 11-7

4-2302 BURGUYNE 26 (P. S. S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

5-11111 GRANVILLE AGAIN 28 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

6-1242 TYNE BRIDGE 28 (B.S.) (P. G. Green) M. Pipe 12-10

7-1253 UPTON PARK 18 (S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

8-2302 BURGUYNE 26 (P. S. S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

BETTING: 5-4 Tyne Bridge, 5-1 Trapper John, 5-2 Burgoyne, 10-1 Upton Park, 12-1 Gay Ruffian, 20-1 Granville Again, 25-1 Roman King, 30-1 Primitive Sinner.

1801: MEETINGS ABANDONED - FROST

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UPTON PARK 18 (S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

BURGUYNE 26 (P. S. S. S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

GRANVILLE AGAIN 28 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

2.30 SWALE SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (Gr. II, £18,200: 2m) (18)

1-021 STAR OATS 27 (B.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

2-015 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

3-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

4-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

5-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

6-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

7-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

8-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

9-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

10-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

11-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

12-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

13-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

14-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

15-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

16-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

17-025 SUSAN'S PET 10 (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

18-030 WINDY 19 (D.F.S.) (M. P. Fanning) M. Morris 11-10

BETTING: 5-4 Tyne Bridge, 5-1 Trapper John, 5-2 Burgoyne, 10-1 Upton Park, 12-1 Gay Ruffian, 20-1 Granville Again, 25-1 Roman King, 30-1 Primitive Sinner.

1801: MEETINGS

RFU announces settlement which will end litigation about England's playing strip

England the all-whites again

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

ENGLAND'S rugby players will take the field against Scotland this afternoon wearing the all-white jerseys with which they have been traditionally associated, after the settlement of a dispute between the Rugby Football Union (RFU) and Cotton Traders, the leisurewear suppliers with whom they have a four-year contract.

Cotton Traders, the Manchester-based company headed by three former England captains, Fran Cotton, Steve Smith and Tony Neary, have been invited to return to the drawing board to create a "new, exclusive design" for use by England next season. For the remainder of this five nations' championship season, England will play in all-white.

In a statement agreed between the two parties, Dudley Wood, the RFU secretary, said yesterday that they were "pleased to announce that a new, exclusive design for the England rugby shirt and associated kit/leisurewear will be created for introduction next season. Cotton Traders Ltd are confirmed as the exclusive licensee to the RFU under a four-year design and supply contract.

"A new design will also be created by Cotton Traders for consideration for future World Cup events during the



term of the license. The achievement of a registerable design is expected to give rise to future royalty payments to the RFU which will be used for the promotion and development of youth rugby. In the meantime the England team will appear in their traditional white kit bearing the English rose in the five nations' championship this season.

Cotton Traders agreed a four-year contract, with a further four-year option, with the RFU in December 1990 and launched their World Cup design which incorporated blue and red stripes at the neck and arm. The intention was, and remains, to produce a shirt whose design could not be pirated, thereby deflecting funds from the game.

However the design did not meet with universal approval and though England wore it throughout their six World Cup matches, the RFU committee decided to revert to all-

white after the tournament. This produced the unhappy and potentially very damaging conflict during which the suppliers sought an injunction to enforce the terms of the contract.

Both parties were represented at a brief legal hearing this week but considerable work behind the scenes has given rise to yesterday's settlement which should preclude further legal involvement.

Both the union and Cotton Traders have been at pains to ensure that the national squad has not been unduly affected by the dispute and Geoff Cooke, the team manager, confirmed that the issue had not affected the players' preparations for the defence of the championship which opens in Edinburgh, where Scotland play England, and Dublin, where Ireland meet Wales.

Despite the prognostications of the bookmakers, Will Carling, the captain, said England did not see themselves as favourites to beat the Scots.

"We had a very close game in the World Cup and just managed to win. Scotland have an amazing record at Murrayfield and if I was in their place, I would be quietly confident.

"One of our objectives is to improve on our World Cup performance and develop as a side. We have to find a balance between a tight and a loose game, we can't be satisfied with what we have achieved."

Cooke expressed sympathy for the two Scottish players, Gary Armstrong and Graham Marshall, who have suffered serious injuries which have forced them out of the championship. "It's very sad for them and the whole English squad wants to pass on best wishes for a speedy recovery," he said.

Rob Andrew, page 36
Best's view, page 36
Murrayfield teams, page 36
Ireland's promise, page 36



Safe pair of hands: Bayfield, of Northampton, will have a vital lineout role on his debut for England in today's Calcutta Cup match at Murrayfield

Teague counts cost

THE hidden cost of World Cup success with England has dogged the life of Mike Teague ever since the tournament ended (Peter Bills writes).

The news that the Gloucester player is seeking compensation from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) for the physical damage he suffered representing his country in the tournament reveals only part of the trauma he has experienced.

Teague, physically shattered and consequently financially troubled, has suffered considerable depression since England's World Cup squad broke up. He has been seen only occasionally at Kingsholm, Gloucester rugby club's home, and has done little work in his family business because of his injuries.

A close colleague said: "Mike has been very down ever since the World Cup

finished. Normally he's one of the lads, but all this seems to have got to him quite badly."

It remains uncertain whether the RFU, although sympathetic, would be willing to create a precedent by providing much financial assistance to the player. The RFU secretary, Dudley Wood, said yesterday: "We are examining the position to see what insurance cover exists, but to insure players against loss of earnings is expensive because of the high risk."

Teague, who is unlikely to play again, was always injured by Gloucester when he represented the club, but it is unclear whether that cover operated when he was on England duty.

FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP BETTING (Cont.) Today's matches: Murrayfield: Scotland 7-4, England 9-4 on draw 16-1. Lansdowne Road: Ireland 4-1 on, Wales 3-1, draw 15-1. Overall championship odds: England 6-4, France 5-2, Scotland 7-2, Ireland 9-2, Wales 50-1

SCHOOL FEES

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Taylor pleased with European draw

GRAHAM Taylor, the England manager, was delighted by yesterday's draw in Gothenburg for the European football championship finals in Sweden from June 10 to 26, which placed his team in the same group as France, the favourites, Sweden and Yugoslavia.

"I could not have asked for better, because we have

avoided the Netherlands, Germany, and also Scotland, who I would not have fancied," Taylor said. "Our group is more or less level, though I would regard Sweden as likely to be the most difficult opponents because they are playing at home."

"I think we will get better as we get nearer the finals, during our series of warm-up

matches," Taylor added.

England's first match is against Yugoslavia in Malmö on June 11. Three days later they meet France at the same venue. The two leading teams from each group, conducted on a round-robin basis, go through to a semi-final stage.

Scotland begin their campaign against the Netherlands, the defending

champions, in Gothenburg on June 12, and Germany at Norrköping on June 15. Andy Roxburgh, the Scotland coach, said: "It is probably the biggest challenge Scotland have faced over the last couple of decades. We relish the prospect — people say we could cause a surprise and we have plenty of opportunity to do that now."

Speed can replace absent Chapman

By CLIVE WHITE

THE theory, expounded by Johnny Giles before Leeds United's FA Cup tie against Manchester United last Wednesday, that Howard Wilkinson's team might fair better without the prolific Lee Chapman will be put to the test today — even if it is three days late and against the wrong opposition.

In the event, Chapman played against the Old Trafford club and nearly ended up the match-winner, but the broken wrist he suffered in that game has given Wilkinson the opportunity to try a new pairing in attack and a new approach against Crystal Palace at Eland Road.

Gary Speed, the young Welsh international midfielder, is likely to partner Rodney Wallace in attack as Leeds endeavour to stay ahead of United in one competition at least. Speed is a prodigious jumper and a fine header of the ball, but Leeds would be ill-advised to use him as a target man as they do Chapman.

With Strachan set to return to midfield, they are more likely to attempt a more methodical build-up, utilising

the skill and pace of Speed, who is the club's second top-scorer with nine goals. The other options would be to play Shurt or Davison in attack, but given their wealth of talent in midfield — Batty also returns after suspension — Speed is the more likely choice.

To counter such a threat, or any threat come to that, from a Leeds team capable of scoring from various quarters, Palace will probably deploy McGoldrick as sweeper in the absence of Young, who begins a four-match suspension.

Palace are the only team to have beaten Leeds in the League this season, though it was in injury time when Bright claimed the only goal of the game.

England can win cash bonus

FROM ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT
CHRISTCHURCH

THERE is incentive enough for England's cricketers to win the first Test of their short series in New Zealand, which started here today, but additional motivation came from last night's announcement of a lucrative bonus scheme.

Teddy Bitter, which sponsors the England team rather than the games in which they play, is to give £10,000 for each Test match victory on this tour, the figure to be divided equally between the players' pool and six charities selected by the team.

As New Zealand have not lost a home series for 12 years, and England have not won a Test here in three tours, it may be that Tedley is taking no extravagant risks.

Tedley is, however, extending the scheme to the World Cup, which starts next month. If England win the cup, the chosen charities will share £50,000 and the players will receive a bonus equal to their tournament prize-money, which will also apply if they are runners-up.

Finishing runners-up in this opening Test would probably sabotage all hope of England winning a three-game

series here for the first time since 1963, when Ted Dexter, now chairman of the England committee, was the captain.

To help guard against the possibility, the four selectors last night declined to name their final XI and included Mark Ramprakash in a squad of 12 for a match certain to start on a pitch of thick but uneven grass cover.

The team manager, Micky Stewart, explained that this change of plan was designed to cover all eventualities but intimated that the final decision would be to give a first appearance to Dermot Reeve.

The Warwickshire all-rounder, aged 28, might have



Reeve: first Test chance

SIMON BARNES ON SATURDAY

Panel quizzed

THE trial of the alleged serial buttock fondler and part-time boxer, Mike Tyson, moves from the bizarre to the surreal. A total of 100 prospective jurors for the trial of Tyson, on one charge of rape and three of other sexual offences, have been asked 78 questions, all of which they must answer as part of the selection procedure.

The questions, submitted by both sides, include these: Have you ever been a member of the National Organisation for Women or another group interested in women's issues? Have you ever had any involvement in boxing? Do you consider yourself to be a thinking person, or a feeling person? What have you read or heard about the trial of William Kennedy Smith and the Tyson charges? What three people, living or dead, do you admire most?

The questioning of prospective jurors is a normal part of legal proceedings in the United States, but these are far more extensive than usual. The trial begins on Monday week. In the meantime I shall try and work out if this column is a thinking column or a feeling column.

No contest

LAST week I declared women would never beat men in the marathon. When, then, do women beat men? They would invariably win the Sharp Quadrathlon, a national event devised by Dr Craig Sharp, the sports scientist. You start with a swim from Dover to Morocco: women have greater endurance and power to resist cold.

You then run across the Sahara: ability to handle heat and to resist dehydration takes women further ahead. Then a 2,500-mile run across the Himalayas: women handle altitude better, too. Final event: a 1,500 metres sprint along a balance beam: if you fall, you start again. Women have better balance. If this were the first event, the men would probably never get onto the second.

Test pilot

THIS column, the ski jumper's friend, is fascinated by the aerodynamics of the ugly but effective V-style, the sport's new fad. Denis Barber writes: "It would seem that they could enjoy even greater lift if a flexible membrane was used between the arms and the upper body, as part of a redesigned ski suit. Perhaps your hero, Eddie the Eagle, would be willing to flight-test the idea."



Memory can play a few tricks

AN ASTONISHING letter reaches me. Peter Maxted wishes to "correct" an autobiographical aside in a recent column. "In the famous match between Gwai Loong and Mark Wong's boys in Hong Kong, it is not true that I was so incensed by the penalty decision that I stormed off to the bar."

The bar adjacent to the touchline was entirely coincidental. Of Simon's extraordinary save I do indeed have to make his word for it. Apparently it was far superior to that of Gordon Banks from Peter Sully, he did save the penalty, and with it the match. The cheers from our supporter could be heard for many yards. In the post-match discussion, an abiding memory is of Simon's face when one of Mark's team upbraided his captain for 'missing a penalty'. Fact: Mr Maxted is confusing this with another time I saved a penalty. I just remember 'em.

Cry for help

THE arguments and courtroom dramas over the United States bobsleigh team have enthralled the world and given much angst to competitors. But there is an all-American way of handling this. "A lot of guys' dreams and aspirations have been shattered," Chuck Leonowicz, the top driver, says. "Something like this is tough to overcome. I called my sports psychologist and my hypnotist — I've got to get prepared."

Up for grabs

AS THE five nations' rugby union championship begins, David Pears, of Britain's 50 most eligible bachelors by *Company*, "Who would he like to settle down with?" "Someone with a great smile, an outward 'girl who's not clingy.' Other eligible sportsmen include: Max Juster, the Cambridge rowing president ("athletic good looks, enjoys poetry") and Lee Sharpe ("about 20 times better-looking than Gazza"). Mind you, so is everyone else.

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